WHIST

American Leads and their History

Nicholas Browse Trist

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

WHIST

AMERICAN LEADS AND THEIR HISTORY

WITH A REVIEW OF
LATER INNOVATIONS
IN THE GAME

BY

NICHOLAS BROWSE TRIST

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CONTENTS

The old-fashioned player.....Page 4
First whist-case sent to London *Field*..... 8
Proctor's opinion of whist as an intellectual pursuit..... 13
Plays supposed to be new, date back to 1742 or earlier.....16, 56, 57
Return leads, when first introduced..... 17
Origin of short whist..... 17
Call for trumps introduced..... 18
"Little Whist School"..... 19
Dr. William Pole asks for model games of whist 22
Henry Jones responds..... 22
"Cavendish" ventures into print..... 23
Pole's fundamental theory of the game..... 25
Protective discard from strength..... 25
Penultimate lead..... 26
Echo of the call..... 26
Change in second lead from ace, queen, knave, more than four in suit..... 26
Ante-penultimate lead..... 28
Reverse discard..... 29
"Change-your-suit" signal.....29, 92

Contents

Play of second hand with king and a small card ..... Page 30, 65
American Leads—Maxims 31
Lead of lowest of a four-card suit—example 33
Underlying principle of First Maxim 34
Second Maxim explained 36
Third Maxim explained 38
History of American Leads begun 43
Third Maxim the first one elaborated 44
Application of whist principles not readily perceived 45
Bearing of lead of lowest of four-card suit, on play of second hand, overlooked 46
Lead of original fourth-best after ace, next developed 47
Fourth-best when suit is opened with low card. 48
Independently formulated by "Cavendish" 48
Claim made for General Drayson as originator of fourth-best lead examined, ... 49
"Cavendish" comes out in *Field* in favor of American Leads 50
"Mogul," "Pembridge," and others attack American Leads 52
"Cavendish" continues to champion them 52
Title-page motto on pamphlet entitled "The American Lead Controversy" 53
Result of Dr. Pole's analysis of the case of covering honor second hand 54
Analysis of play of third hand by "Cavendish" —unblocking play 54
Hoyle gives an example of unblocking 56
The sub-echo 57
Lead of knave from head of sequence abandoned 59

Contents

Lead of queen with king, more than four in suit, Page 59
Lead of queen with ace, king, more than four in suit 61
Lead of knave with ace, king, queen, more than four in suit 61
Change in Second Maxim made necessary by new lead of queen 61
The eleven rule 63
American Leads simplified 66
System as a whole should be called "Anglo-American Leads" 68
Second Maxim as originally formulated attacked 69
Author's reasons for adhering to it 72
Supported by Mr. C. D. P. Hamilton 76
Tendency of improvement in whist 77
American people take up the game 81
Trumps showing play 84
Irregular lead as a call for trumps through a turned-up honor 85
Echoing with high indifferent cards 87
The three-trumps echo 88
The discard 95
The rotary discard 97
"Force-me and don't-force-me" discard 101
Street attachment 103
Fourth-best lead from ace, five in suit 105
Comments of Mr. Whitfeld on the result of his analysis of that lead 106
Author's remarks on same 109
Lead from "top-of-nothing" 115
Lead of ten from queen, knave, ten 116
Lead of fourth-best from king, knave, ten 117

Contents

Proposed change of lead from ace, king, queen, knave, five or more in suit.....Page 121
New systems 123
Howell system 124
Short-suit system..... 124
Short-suit game not sound..... 129
Long-suit scientific game compared with others. 131
Playing to the score..... 135
Example by James Clay..... 136
Advice to beginners..... 139
Effects of multiplicity of systems..... 141
Anglo-American Leads, in detail..... 145
Number of leads from each card 155
Concluding remarks..... 158

Part I

The History of American Leads, and, incidentally, the Progress of Whist from the days of Hoyle to the year 1892

Whist

WHAT! another work on Whist to study? No, my disheartened, book-ridden learner; only a fragment of Whist history, of which I happen to know something, for I propose to tell you about American Leads, trusting that my narrative will prove interesting, and, mayhap, instructive too.

About thirty years ago I began to play whist with some friends. We had no book to guide us; in fact, our ignorance was such that, with the exception of the immortal Hoyle, we did not know even the names of any writers on the game. So we began by playing as best we could, using what common-sense and judgment we possessed, fancying all the while that we were playing a pretty good game of

whist. Now you know what kind of a game that is, for, although the number is gradually diminishing, you still frequently meet the old-fashioned, common-sense player, as he complacently styles himself, who scorns the books and holds in contempt the "machine players," and he often proves the sincerity of his opinion by being ready to back up with money his game against the book game. You find, not infrequently, that he has a good memory, and is not lacking in perception; he plays indifferently the lowest or highest of a sequence, and, excepting from some combinations of high cards, opens every suit from the middle, so that no small card of the adversaries may make. His lead of predilection, however, is the singleton, and his countenance fairly beams with satisfaction when he thereby succeeds in getting in a little trump; but the happiest moment of his whist life is, when, at the close of the hand, he can triumphantly spread out a handful of trumps, which he has carefully bottled up,

for apparently no other purpose than to bring about this dazzling *finale*, quite unmindful of the fact that he often entombs one or more good cards of his partner's, which would have made separately, had he extracted the adversaries' trumps early in the hand.

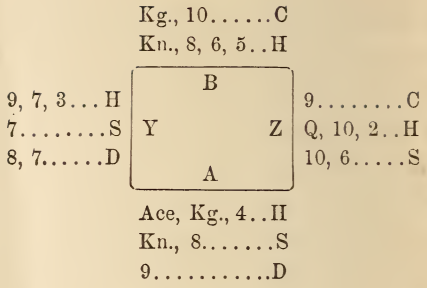
Our players found out in a very short time that the establishing of a long suit, with a view of bringing in its remnant after exhausting the trumps of the opponents, was one of the prime factors of success at whist, and the singleton lead was relegated to the second rank. This was a long stride in the right direction; but, in other respects, our play was such as would have maddened the experts of to-day in any attempts to read our hands. In its emotional aspect, that kind of game may be said to have a certain advantage over the scientific one, for, in the latter, as each suit is gradually developed, you can read the impending doom in the silent language of the cards, and black care sits on your brow to the end of the hand; while in

the haphazard contest, hope springs in your breast, if not eternal, at least to the close of the play, for the position of the cards not being known with any degree of certainty, you trust that some of them may turn up in your partner's hand and convert threatened defeat into victory.

We went on in this way for some time, and perhaps in the course of years we might have gradually worked out some of the elementary rules of play, as now understood, when one day an Irish gentleman, who had been overlooking our game and probably thought it deserving of encouragement, sent me a little book, entitled *The Laws and Practice of Whist*, by "Cœlebs" (Carlyon). This proved a revelation to us. From that moment to learn scientific Whist became our aim, so we ordered several copies of that little book; on opening the packet, when received from a New York dealer, we found it to contain not "Cœlebs," which could not be got in that city, but "Cavendish," fifth

edition, substituted by the bookseller on his own responsibility. Upon a comparison of the two works, we soon discovered that we were the gainers by the exchange, and we went to work to study and play the game in the illuminating rays of the new light shed upon it by the brilliant mind of the author. And well did it repay us, for I vividly remember to this day the great pleasure experienced as the beauties of the scientific game gradually unfolded themselves, and the satisfaction felt, as practice demonstrated the soundness of rules of play, based on certain correct principles so clearly and concisely laid down by Henry Jones, who is so well known wherever Whist is played, under his pseudonym of "Cavendish."

This book acquaintance with "Cavendish" was supplemented some years later by correspondence, which had its origin through my sending to the London *Field* a Whist case, based on actual play, in which the position of the cards was as follows:



Clubs trumps. Heart suit not opened. Position of the other cards known, except that A and B do not know which of Y and Z holds two spades. A and B must take every trick to save and win game.

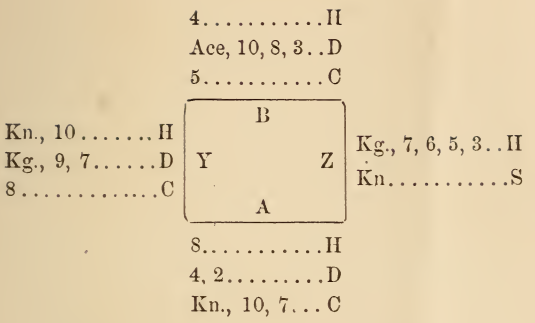
A led the nine of diamonds. B must trump to prevent Z from making his nine; and, for the purpose of extracting it, Z, needing but one trick to save and win game, sees that his best chance of doing this is to retain the minor tenace in spades and a double guard to his queen of hearts; and knowing, besides, that his trump will be drawn, throws it to the trick. This play proclaims the holding of the small spade, the position of which was doubtful,

and B can now read Z's reasons for under-trumping; therefore he forces the discard which Z is trying to avoid by leading the king of trumps. Z discards the two of hearts, A the eight of spades, and Y the seven of spades. B now leads the five of hearts, and A B take all six tricks. You will note here that B does not follow the rule to treat a long suit as a short one when it cannot go round more than three times. Had he played the knave of hearts in accordance with it, he would have lost the game, for Z covers with queen and the nine makes in Y's hand; but B saw that to win the game his partner must hold ace of hearts, with the king or queen. In either case he will capture the singly guarded honor, which is assumed to be held by Z—for if Y has it the game is lost; therefore B properly led the small heart, reserving the knave to take the third trick.

This ending I have given to my readers not only because it paved the way to American Leads by inaugurating a correspondence with "Cavendish," but also for

the reason that it is interesting, containing, as it does, so many illustrative points: 1st, the trumping of partner's trick by B; 2d, the under-trumping by Z as the best chance of winning; 3d, the lead of the thirteenth trump to force a discard; 4th, the lead of the small heart by B, contrary to rule; and 5th, playing to the score; otherwise B might be deterred from leading the last trump lest Y make his eight of diamonds, as the chances are that he holds a card of entry in hearts. The case was published in the *Field*, with approving remarks by "Cavendish," the card editor of that paper. From this occurrence dates the beginning of a correspondence between us which was kept up, with but little intermission, up to the time of his death, and which has proved a source of much pleasure and profit to me.

After this I occasionally contributed to the *Field* an illustrative hand. In one of them, published in 1883, the position of the cards, after the seventh trick, was as follows:



Z turned up the knave of diamonds. The odd trick wins the game for either side. A B have scored two tricks and Y Z, five.

In the beginning of the play B called for trumps, to which A responded by leading the six, Y playing the five, B the queen, and Z the knave. Barring false cards, B is marked with the three and Z has no more. B did not continue the trumps, but returned his partner's club suit, taken with the queen by Z, who then won the next trick with the queen of spades, which brings us to the above position. Z follows with the king of

hearts, securing the sixth trick for his side, and leads a small heart. A and B are now in a desperate strait, for they must take all the remaining tricks to save and win game, against the king of trumps doubly guarded in Y's hand. A trumps the small heart with the four, although he holds the two also; it looks as if it made no difference, but in doing so A makes a beautiful play. He reasons in this way: "My partner must hold the ace of trumps or the game is lost; he cannot have with it the king and ten, or he would have drawn Y's trumps; he also does not hold ace, king, nine, else he would have continued with the king and waited for a lead of trumps from me; therefore it is necessary that I lead twice through Y as the only chance of winning; but B has one trump too many for that scheme to succeed, and he must get rid of the superfluous one on this trick and still leave me in the lead, and this he cannot do if I trump with the two." B rises to the situation and under-trumps with the three. A then leads the two of

trumps, which B takes with the eight, plays the club, taken by A, who leads another club, and B captures the nine and king of trumps. It is to be observed that Z would have won the game by playing the knave of spades at the ninth trick, when Y must not over-trump A, but should discard his club; but it is possible that Y has no other heart, and Z tries to force him in that suit as the best chance of winning.

The foregoing hand was published, not to illustrate the grand *coup* played by B, for that has been done too often to be repeated, but to show the masterly play of A in trumping with the four. "Cavendish" was so well pleased with it, that he embodied it in the next edition of his well-known work on Whist. Still, I would not have produced it here were it not for the fact that it gave to the late Richard A. Proctor, the eminent astronomer and whist author, the opportunity to express the high opinion in which he held the game of whist as an intellectual pursuit. After

publishing the hand in *Knowledge*, of which he was the editor, when outlining the features which he intended to make prominent in the volume of that scientific weekly about to begin with the new year, he said: "The papers on chess and whist will be continued as before. We continue to regard whist, as well as chess, as a scientific game, though some correspondents, who apparently know little of the game and nothing of its real charms, objurgate us for allowing what they call a mere chance game to be dealt with in these columns. We invite those who so view whist to study the game which adorns our whist column this week, and to consider whether an average problem in mathematics would more effectually test the powers of combination than the problem which was presented to all four players at the close of this remarkable game."

It was about this time that I wrote to "Cavendish" a letter containing the germ of one branch of American Leads. Before giving their history, I deem it expedient

to trace first, as evolved through years of experience and practice, certain well-recognized principles of the game on which those leads are based. In doing so, I will not confine myself to the examination of those principles bearing more directly on American Leads, but propose to note also, in a cursory manner and chiefly from a chronological point of view, the other main developments of the game, which preceded and followed the introduction of American Leads up to the year 1892.

The great majority of players have rather confused ideas as to the time when some of its most important features were incorporated into the game. They are generally under the impression that all that is good in whist has been introduced into it within comparatively modern times. They will, therefore, be surprised to learn that a good many of the rules as laid down by Hoyle, more than a century and a half ago, are now followed by them in their daily practice. I have more than

once heard advanced players say to a beginner: "With king, queen, knave, and two or more small cards, the *modern* rule is to lead the knave, and not the king, as you did"; little suspecting that Hoyle gave the same advice in the following words: "If you have a sequence of king, queen, knave, and two small ones, whether you are strong in trumps or not, it is the best play to begin with the knave, because by getting the ace out of any hand you make room for the whole suit." Particular attention has been drawn to this lead for the reason that on the principle which underlies it is based one division of American Leads, as will be seen hereinafter. This and other still practised rules of play, given by Hoyle in his treatise published in 1742, doubtless came into existence some years anterior to that date; for it is safe to assume that, if not all, at least the greater part of his work is but a compilation of the principles and rules of play as he found them understood and practised by Lord Folkestone and other

fine players of his day. We are, therefore, now following some orders of play formulated at least one hundred and seventy years ago.

The next advance was the introduction of that important rule which directs that, in returning your partner's lead, you should play the higher card, having but two remaining, and the lowest, having three. It is not known when this rule was first introduced into the game, but it found its way into print about 1770, in the following words: "In returning your partner's lead, play the best you have when you hold but three originally" (Payne's *Maxims*). Mathews gives the rule, somewhat amplified, in his *Advice to the Young Whist Player*, published about 1805.

A few years prior to this last date, short whist came into existence by the points of the game being reduced from ten to five and the calling of honors abolished. Mr. Clay, in his delightful little work on Whist —which should be in the hands of every learner—gives an account of how this oc-

curred. He says that "Lord Peterborough having one night lost a large sum of money, the friends with whom he was playing proposed to make the game five points, instead of ten, in order to give the loser a chance of recovering his loss. The new game was found to be so lively, and money changed hands with such rapidity, that these gentlemen and their friends, all leading members of the clubs of the day, continued to play it."

The next important development was the call for trumps. It was first introduced some sixty years ago at "Graham's," a great card club in London, but which was dissolved a little later. Lord Henry Bentinck, a player of high repute, is credited with its invention. He is said to have afterwards bitterly regretted his ingenuity, which had deprived him of much of the advantage which he derived from his superior play by making the game easier for the moderate player. Although it is admitted that the call for trumps was naturally evolved from cor-

rect lines of play, yet it is considered by the best authorities to be no improvement; but it is now a permanent feature of the game, and has to be dealt with as such. One thing, however, is certain—it has added much interest to the game for the beginner.

We now come to an event in the history of whist, apparently insignificant, but which was fraught with the future welfare of the game, for it led to the introduction of "*Cavendish*" into the whist world, the man to whom Whist owes more for its advancement than to any other since the days of Hoyle.

This event was the coming together of the "knot of young men" who played whist at Cambridge, and afterwards in London, between 1850 and 1860, referred to by Dr. William Pole in the introduction to his *Philosophy of Whist.*

The facts concerning this "Little Whist School," so far as I have been able to ascertain them, are, that shortly after 1850 Mr. Daniel Jones, brother of "Cavendish,"

and others, some of whom are mentioned below, used to play whist at Cambridge in much the same way as other young men. It seems that, contrary to the general impression, Mr. Henry Jones was not of the party, as he was then pursuing his medical studies at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, in London. After these gentlemen had taken their degrees, they and "Cavendish" used to meet in London about the year 1854. The regular players were Mr. Edward Wilson, Mr. W. Dundas Gardiner, Mr. Daniel Jones, and Mr. Henry Jones. Although others used to join in the play at times, the four named formed the backbone of the "Little School." When these four met they used to play every hand through to the end for the sake of science, and also for the purpose of making certain calculations. They, moreover, wrote down interesting hands, of which more anon. It was in the nature of things that these four whist enthusiasts, who were young men of "considerable ability," as Dr.

Pole calls them, should argue, and that they should not always agree. They had the advantage over most beginners of being able to refer disputed points to the late James Clay, then the acknowledged authority on whist. The cases were written down and submitted to Mr. Clay through the medium of Mr. Henry Derviche Jones, F.R.C.S., father of "Cavendish," who happened at that time to be chairman of the Portland Club, the headquarters of English Whist, where he often met Mr. Clay.

About 1860 the "Little School" ceased to meet, owing to circumstances over which the members had no control. A number of manuscripts which had accumulated were thrown into a drawer, and there they would probably have remained to this day but for the following accident:

In *Macmillan's Magazine* of December, 1861, appeared an article, "Games at Cards for the Coming Winter." It was signed "W. P." In the course of the article the following passage occurred: "It

would be a great boon if some good authority would publish a set of model games of whist with explanatory remarks, such as are found so useful in chess, for example."

The future "Cavendish" having read this article, wrote to "W. P." that he happened to have a number of whist hands in manuscript, and should be happy to lend them to him. He received a reply from no less a person than Dr. William Pole, F.R.S., etc., saying that he should like to see the hands.

Before forwarding, "Cavendish" thought he would just read the hands over. He found the "Little School" had taken so much for granted that the MSS. would probably be unintelligible to Dr. Pole. Thus, if A led from his strong suit, no remark was made about it; or, if B, when returning his partner's lead, and holding the three and the two, returned the three in preference to the two, no reason was given for it. So "Cavendish" began to rewrite. In order to avoid repetition, he

erected some of the instructions into principles, to which he referred as occasion required. He also added a few elementary reasons for each line of play. Dr. Pole examined the MS., and wrote to the effect that its contents were a revelation to him, and that Jones ought to publish; so as "Cavendish," the name of his then club, he ventured into print, in 1862, with a modest 250 copies. The rest every whist player knows; his success was great; and I have his authority to say that by 1891 he had disposed of 59,000 copies of his *Laws and Principles of Whist*. Since that date he must have sold several thousands more. So much for an accident. But to return to the "Little School."

It was first so christened by a writer in the *Quarterly Review* of January, 1871. Then a storm arose. The late Abraham Hayward wrote to the London *Morning Post* to say that none of the most celebrated players of the day were aware of the existence of this school. That was not surprising, considering that the play-

ers named had no idea they formed a school until after the publication of the *Quarterly*, when they "awoke and found themselves famous." Hayward added, in the *Post:* "Did these young men originate or elaborate or compass anything, or did they merely arrange what was well known and procurable before?" To this "Cavendish" replied: "What I claim for the Little School is that in our book we gave for the first time the reasoning on which the principles of whist-play are based, logically and completely." It does not appear that the "Little School" originated any alterations worthy of record. These came later, as we shall see further on.

In consequence, doubtless, of the reputation achieved by him through his book, "Cavendish" was given charge of the card department of the London *Field* in December, 1862. This was a most fortunate occurrence, as it contributed not a little to the subsequent unity and stability of the game, by making the *Field* the medium through which all improve-

ments or alterations are suggested, discussed, adopted, or rejected, as the case may be.

But to return to the progress of Whist.

In 1864 Dr. William Pole published an essay on the "Theory of the Modern Scientific Game of Whist," as a second part to the sixteenth edition of the well-known work, *Short Whist, by Major A.*, in which he enunciated the fundamental theory of the modern scientific game to be—"That the hands of the two partners shall not be played singly and independently, but shall be combined and treated as one. And that to carry out most effectually this principle of combination each partner shall adopt the long-suit system as the general basis of his play."

That this theory is sound is proved by the fact that it regulates the play of the great majority of players to this day.

The earliest of the cases elaborated, after the appearance of *Cavendish on Whist*, was the protective discard from strength. This was first noticed in the

Field of November 30, 1867, and explained in the eighth edition, 1868. The kernel of this is contained in the advice given by Mathews: "If weak in trumps, keep guard on your adversary's suits; if strong, throw away from them."

The next advance was the penultimate lead from suits of more than five cards (*Field*, October 12 and 26 and November 2, 1872), followed by the echo of the call (same paper, July 25, 1874). These are duly noted in the tenth edition of *Cavendish on Whist*, dated June, 1874.

On September 11 and October 16, 1875, were published in the *Field* two articles by "Cavendish" on leads. They are, to my mind, so important as forerunners of the present system of American Leads, showing what was then "in the air," as it has since been called, that I quote from them at length.

"Cavendish" says: "From ace, queen, knave, and two or more small ones, the proper lead is ace, then knave, instead of the usual ace, then queen; because, with

five of the suit, you want partner, if he held king and two small ones originally, to put his king on second round." He also says: "The usual lead from ace, queen, knave, ten, is ace, then queen. This, however, is wrong, as it is not the game for partner to put king on queen led after ace, he having king and two small ones originally. He thereby blocks the suit on the third round. The proper lead from ace, queen, knave, ten, with or without small ones, is ace, then ten. . . . The partner of the player who leads ace, then ten, should put the king on the ten—in plain suits—if he had three originally, but not if he had four. Hence . . . the third player's hand can be counted when he has the king."

"Cavendish" then proceeded to show that, by a parity of reasoning, the proper lead from the queen, knave, ten combination is queen, then knave, with four in suit; and queen, then ten, with more than four.

These leads were evidently so correct in

principle that they found immediate favor. They are introduced in the eleventh edition of *Cavendish on Whist*, 1876. The lead from ace, queen, knave, ten combination has, however, been since altered in one respect: with one or more small cards, the ten is ignored and the knave is led after the ace, the same as from ace, queen, knave, two or more small ones.

From the foregoing it would appear that a great whist advance was made between the years 1864 and 1876.

In 1879, Colonel, now General, A. W. Drayson, in his *Art of Practical Whist*—one of the most interesting books on the game—recommended the lead of the antepenultimate from a suit of six cards. He furthermore suggested, with ace and five others, to lead the ace, then the smallest but one—that is, the original *fifth*-best. This, to some extent, foreshadowed American Leads, although the object of the Drayson rules was solely to show number. In the *Field* of April 8, 1882, the same author suggested that when the trumps

were all out, the play of an unnecessarily high card would be a direction to change the suit. He argues that the call for trumps is, in reality, a command to "change the suit to trumps"; consequently when, the trumps being all out, you play an unnecessarily high card, you can only imply that you want the suit changed to another plain suit. General Drayson has also proposed the reverse discard as a rule of play useful on occasions. It is the throwing, on the second discard, of a card of the same suit lower than the one first discarded, under circumstances when such play cannot be a call for trumps or an echo. For instance, your cards are such that you are forced to discard from your strong long suit. On two trump leads from your partner you first discard the penultimate, then the lowest of your suit, and you have, as it were, by reversing the order of the cards thrown away, negatived the meaning of the first discard, which proclaimed weakness in the suit. These last two rules of play appear

to be sound, and are used by many advanced players.

In three articles, the first of which appeared in the *Field* of April 28, 1883, Dr. William Pole applied the laws of probabilities to the ever-vexed question of the play of the king and a small card, second hand, with the result of confirming the practice of playing the small card, as a general rule.

"Mogul," a whist celebrity, had, as far back as 1867, demonstrated the same fact by what "Pembridge," the clever author of *Whist or Bumblepuppy*, termed "a masterly analysis, itself a miracle of industry," and who himself arrived at the same conclusion after keeping a record of over four thousand two hundred cases from actual play.

We have now reached the epoch of American Leads.

Although American Leads are extensively played in this country, many players who follow them are ignorant of the principles on which they are based, prob-

ably because these leads were suggested, explained, discussed, and abused in an English paper—the London *Field*—which has but a limited circulation in America. Therefore, before giving the history of the development of those leads, it appears advisable to go over well-trodden ground, for the benefit of the many who play them without knowing the principles on which they are founded.

The maxims or rules laid down by American Leads are as follows:

1. When you open a strong suit with a *low card*, *lead the fourth-best.*

2. When you open a strong suit with a *high card*, and next lead a *low card*, lead the *fourth-best*, *counting from and including the card first led.*

3. When you remain with two *high indifferent cards*, lead the higher, if you opened a *suit of four; the lower*, if you opened a *suit of more than four.*

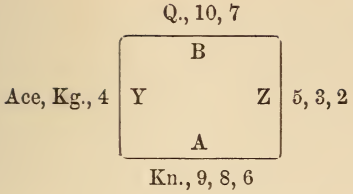
Maxims or Rules 1 and 2 are component parts of that principle governing the original lead which demands that it should be

from the longest suit, inasmuch as they provide a system which points out the card to be uniformly led from the long suit, under the contingencies mentioned in those rules. The selection of the particular card to be led is not purely arbitrary, but is founded on reason, as I will proceed to show.

A suit of four cards is considered to be numerically strong, because it contains a number of cards over the average due to each player. It is the long suit of minimum strength, and therefore is the one held the most frequently. It is, so to speak, the type of the long suit.

One of the results of opening a four-card suit from the bottom is, that the leader remains with three cards higher than the one led. The information contained in this simple fact is very important, as it often enables the partner of the leader to place certain cards in his hands.

Suppose the cards to lie as follows:



A leads the six; and the king, seven, and two fall; when A again obtains the lead he plays the eight; Y, the ace; B now knows that A must hold the knave and nine, the only two unplayed cards which are higher than the six. He can, therefore, safely throw his queen on the ace, and thus, perhaps, enable A to gain a trick by unblocking the suit.

Now give to A another small card, say the two, and suppose he opens the suit with it; when it becomes B's turn to play on the second round, he will know nothing certain about the position of the knave and nine, and therefore cannot unblock, as he might lose a trick by attempting to do so.

The opening of a four-card suit from the bottom affording incidentally, as we

have seen, valuable information as to the number, and often as to the rank, of certain cards remaining in leader's hand, the question arises, Cannot this information be imparted in the opening of long suits containing more than four cards?

The solution of the question is simple: bring that class of cases under one system, and *treat every long suit opened with a low card as if it contained four cards only; therefore lead your fourth-best*, and the rest follows.

For instance:

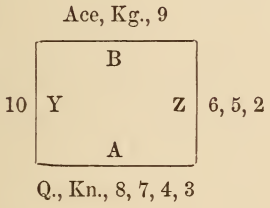
From	Kg., Kn., 8	6	
"	Kg., Kn., 8	6	5
"	Kg., Kn., 8	6	5, 3
"	Kg., Kn., 8	6	5, 3, 2, etc.

The six is the proper card to lead in each case, leaving, invariably, three cards higher than the one led in the leader's hand.

As will be perceived by an examination of the above example, "Cavendish's" penultimate and Drayson's antepenultimate leads, introduced to show number, are

fractions of the system—outlying islands discovered before the mainland.

Another incidental advantage of the system is that frequently some of the small cards which have not fallen to the first and second rounds are marked in leader's hand. Examine the following diagram sent by me to "Cavendish" at the time we were discussing the matter,



and you will perceive that if A leads the seven (fourth-best), B can place, on the first round, queen, knave, eight in his partner's hand, and on the second round—barring a false card by Z—he can place the remaining small cards: the six with Z, and the four with A—for if the latter had the six, he would have played it on

the second round, in order to declare the holding of the four and three.

If A leads the three originally, his partner will know next to nothing about his suit.

The same system applies to suits of more than four cards which are opened with a high card, followed with a low one (Maxim or Rule 2); that is, we also treat them as containing four cards only, and lead the *original fourth-best* after quitting the head of the suit. By adhering to system we preserve the advantage incidental to the play of a four-card suit similarly opened — of giving the information that the leader holds exactly two cards higher than the one led by him on the second round.

EXAMPLE.

	1st Lead.		2d Lead.	
From	Ace	Kn., 8	6	5
"	Ace	Kn., 8	6	5, 3
"	Ace	Kn., 8	6	5, 3, 2

The king being no longer led from more than four cards, we may take suits headed by the ace as the type of the long suit opened from the top, because it is the one

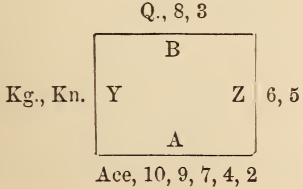
most frequently held. Now, in dropping from the ace to the original fourth-best, there always remain in the leader's hand two cards intermediate in value between the ones led to the first and second rounds; therefore, in order to obtain analogous results in the opening of the king, queen, more than four suits, the queen should be followed with the original fourth-best, counting from and including the queen.

EXAMPLE.

	Not Counted.	1st Lead.		2d Lead.	
From	Kg.	Qu.	8, 6	5	
"	Kg.	Qu.	8, 6	5	3
"	Kg.	Qu.	8, 6	5	3, 2

Hence Maxim or Rule 2 was formulated so as to be general in its application.

Here is an example from actual play of the working of Maxim or Rule 2:



A, after leading the ace, played the seven; when it became B's turn to play to the second round, he knew that A held the ten and nine, so he threw the queen to the king, thus unblocking A's suit, which enabled him to make four more tricks in it—a gain of three to the partnership, for A had no card of re-entry after the trumps were exhausted, and B let him in with the eight of the suit, which he would otherwise have blocked had he retained the queen.

The second branch of American Leads, which comes under Maxim or Rule 3, relates to the lead of high indifferent cards, marked in the player's hand, and is based on the principle that with such cards, in opening suits of more than average numerical strength, the aim should be to get the master-card out of partner's hand, so as to free the suit.

This principle is at least as old as Hoyle, and he put it in practice, as we have seen above, by directing that, with king, queen, knave, and two small ones, you should be-

gin with the knave, and giving the reasons for so doing. This remained an isolated case until "Cavendish," carrying the principle one step further, introduced, in 1875, the modification of the three leads quoted above — that is, following the ace with the knave instead of queen, from ace, queen, knave, more than one small; following the ace with the ten instead of queen from ace, queen, knave, ten, with or without small ones (since changed as noted above), and following queen with the ten, instead of knave, from queen, knave, ten, with more than one small one; always leading, on the second round, as you will observe, the lower of the high indifferent cards, to induce partner to clear the suit by playing the master-card on the lower one, which he would not do on the higher one, if led.

But, when "Cavendish" applied the principle in question to the leads just above noted, the limit of the cases affected by that principle had by no means been reached, for the system of play nec-

essary to put the principle in action is susceptible of being extended to a number of cases analogous in other respects, but where the fundamental reason, which gave being to the principle, no longer exists—in other words, when the master-card of the suit is forced on the first round or is in the hand of the leader.

When you invite your partner to get rid of the command of your suit, you necessarily impart to him, at the same time, the knowledge that your suit is one of more than average numerical strength, otherwise there could be no object to have it unblocked. The message, then, which you convey to him by the card led on the second round, is a twofold one. You ask him to free your suit at the opportune moment, and you inform him that you possess a long suit containing a certain determinate number of cards.

Consequently, when the master-card of the suit is forced on the first round, or you hold it yourself, the question of clearing the suit is solved before you have

occasion to make your second lead; still there remains the important information to be disclosed to your partner concerning the numerical strength of your suit; therefore, with a suit of more than four cards, you lead, on the second round, the same card which you would have played to induce him to unblock your suit — that is, the lower of two indifferent high cards; with a shorter suit, you lead the higher of those cards.

To illustrate, take a suit headed by the king, knave, and ten; you begin with the ten, the proper card to lead from that combination; the queen, or both the queen and ace fall to the first round and you are left with two high indifferent cards — the king and knave; still you follow the rule laid down, and you lead the knave after the ten, if your suit comprised five or more cards; and you lead the king after the ten, if it contained less than five; thus imparting valuable information to your partner.

A stronger case in point is when you

hold ace, king, queen, with five or more in suit. As the master-card is in your hand, there can be no question of unblocking; still, you follow the line of play intended primarily as a direction to your partner to clear the suit, but which you now use for the sole purpose of conveying certain valuable information to him regarding the numerical strength of your suit; therefore, with five in suit, you lead ace after queen, and, with more than five, you lead king after queen.

At the time of the introduction of American Leads, this system of play was applied to the lead on the third round of a suit, owing to the fact that at that period some suits headed by four high cards were treated differently than they are now. For example, with ace, queen, knave, ten combination, the ten was led after the ace, with any number in suit; then, third round, the queen was led with four in suit, and the knave was led with more than four. But, since then, the leads which required a third round to dis-

close the number of cards in suit have been so modified and simplified that this information is now imparted, in all cases, by the card led on the second round, as will be seen hereinafter.

The system of American Leads having thus been briefly explained, I will now proceed to give their history.

In July, 1883, I wrote to "Cavendish" the letter which I have referred to as containing the germ of one branch of American Leads. I said, in part, "With a suit headed by king, knave, ten, the lead of the ten forcing out the queen, I always follow with king when I had originally four of the suit, and with knave when I had originally five or more. I have no book authority for this, but I find it gives my partner valuable information." My letter went on to explain the reasons for so leading, which were substantially the same as those which have been given above for the play of high indifferent cards. This letter was published in the *Field*, with a note by "Cavendish," from which I quote

the following extracts: "We have submitted our correspondent's king, knave, ten, etc., 'notion' to several good players, and they are all of opinion that his system of leading is correct, and justifiable on general principles. We have stated over and over again in the *Field* that conventional rules of play are founded on extensions of principle, notwithstanding that the reason which led to the adoption of the original principle does not exist in the conventional cases. . . . As soon as the convention with regard to return leads was fully established—viz., to return the higher of two cards for the sole purpose of affording information, though this higher card were perchance only the three—the present extensions of a similar rule to leads were certain to follow after a time. In the case of this particular lead from king, knave, ten, no rule, so far as we know, has ever been previously laid down, and our valued correspondent is entitled to the credit of having applied the extension to an omitted case."

Although the germ of the system was contained in the above case, it was not until the beginning of the next year that it dawned upon me that this line of play was applicable to many other cases, and in March, 1884, I sent to the *Field* a short article in which I suggested the adoption of the now generally accepted rule for the play of high indifferent cards, arguing that it was based on the extension of a recognized general principle, and giving a number of examples.

Mark how slowly the application of a whist principle seems to work itself into the human understanding. Hoyle gives an isolated case—king, queen, knave lead —involving a principle. One hundred and thirty-odd years elapse before "Cavendish" applies it to other leads; eight more years go by before the principle is extended to another isolated case — king, knave, ten example; and it takes another twelve months' mental incubation to bring forth the generalization of the principle. What appears to be specially worthy of

note is the fact that the king, knave, ten example was before the best whist-players of the world for several months, and not one of them seems to have perceived that it was but the application to one case of the extension of a well-established principle, which was susceptible of being generalized so as to embrace numerous cognate cases.

What is also a matter of surprise is the fact that whist writers and players had not recognized the obvious bearing of the lead of the lowest of a four-card suit on the play of second hand; for instance, with king, knave, nine, one or more small, second player should cover with the nine the eight led by a good player on the original lead of the hand; otherwise the eight will hold the trick, for if the leader has opened from a four-card suit, his remaining cards must be the ace, queen, and ten. As well as I can remember, Clay is the only writer who came near the mark when he read the nine, knave, king (or ace) in the hand of a player who led the six,

and advised third player to finesse the ten, holding also the seven, eight, and queen; but he does not seem to have noticed the importance of the information as affecting the play of second hand.

During the interval between the publication of the two articles on the lead of high indifferent cards I furnished to the *Field* a letter on "the penultimate lead on the second round of the suit," in which the penultimate was recommended as the proper lead after quitting the head of the suit, in order to show number. In commenting on this suggested method of play, "Cavendish," in a *Field* article, after giving one favorable position and two unfavorable ones, concluded by saying: "If N. B. T. will class the cases after analysis in which a trick cannot be given away by his method, and can thence formulate a plain rule of play, I think his proposed method might be advantageously employed. Perhaps he will kindly try his hand at this, and send result to the *Field*. I

think, however, he will find it more troublesome than he expects."

This elicited the suggested analysis published in the *Field* April 5, 1884, the result of which was the formulating of a rule of play which would leave a never-varying interval of two cards between the card first led and the one led to the second round; afterwards put in a more concise way by directing the follow of the "original fourth-best."

The lead of the fourth-best when opening a suit with a low card was not advocated by me in print, but was settled between "Cavendish" and me by correspondence. What is not generally known —for Mr. Henry Jones has modestly kept it to himself—is that he independently suggested this rule of play in a letter which crossed one from me of the same import.

In his letter "Cavendish" said: "I call four the normal number in strong suits. It is the type; more than four is very strong. Treat every suit (except ace suits

and king, queen, knave suits with five) as though you held only four, without the supernumerary small cards. The rest follows." I wrote: "Treat every long suit as if it were originally the ordinary long suit of four cards; consequently, lead the fourth from the top, or drop down to the fourth from the top, on quitting the head of the suit."

It seems from the above that our ideas on the subject ran parallel, and whatever credit may attach to the introduction of the fourth-best when a low card is led, "Cavendish" is certainly entitled to his share of it.

While on the subject of fourth-bests, I beg my reader's permission for a short digression. As it has been claimed for General Drayson that he first introduced the fourth-best lead, I take this opportunity to note the difference between his antepenultimate and the fourth-best. He extended the principle of the penultimate lead of "Cavendish" to suits of six cards: both schemes were admittedly intended

solely to show number. The fourth-best lead, on the other hand, applied to every long suit, and thus erected into a system based on a principle, is intended primarily to show the possession by the leader of three cards higher than the one originally led, the holding of smaller cards and number in suit being disclosed incidentally. Although this difference has been pointed out by other writers, I thought it well to refer to it, lest my silence be construed into an admission that the claim made for General Drayson is well founded.

For some time after the publication of the articles in the *Field*, nothing more appeared in print on the subject. In the meantime it was evident, from the letters of Mr. Henry Jones to me, that "American Leads," as he called them, were growing in his estimation. He wanted me to publish them in pamphlet form, but, not being inclined to do so, I left it to him to champion the leads, and on the 9th of August, 1884, there appeared in the *Field* the first

article on American Leads by "Cavendish," in the introduction to which he said: "Having satisfied ourselves that these leads are sound and in harmony with general principles of play, and that they are advantageous to those who practise them, there is evidently but one course open to us, viz., to give them our unqualified support." In this, and in two other articles which followed during the same month, he explained the whole system of American Leads in a clear and forcible manner, which must have carried conviction to any unbiassed mind.

That an unknown individual signing himself N. B. T. was suggesting some innovations to the game seemed to be a matter of perfect indifference to the conservatives, who paid not the slightest attention to his articles; but when "Cavendish" declared that he intended to give his "unqualified support" to American Leads, the mediæval division of players rose up in arms against the proposed improvements.

"Mogul" put on his war-paint and made some savage attacks in the *Field* on American Leads and their authors, denouncing the leads as "abominable modern inventions." "Pembridge" rushed into print with *The Decline and Fall of Whist*, in which he gave vent to his pent-up feelings "of abhorrence of the recent proceedings of the new academy"; and several of the lesser whist lights also entered the lists against American Leads.

The denunciations of these parties did not in the least alter "Cavendish's" opinion, for he continued to champion American Leads in every possible manner. In February, 1885, he delivered a lecture on the subject to a large gathering of prominent whist-players, in the drawing-room of the United Whist Club, in London, a summary of which appeared in the New York *Spirit of the Times*, March 14, 1885. In the following month he published, in the same paper, an article entitled "Mr. Barlow on American Leads at Whist," containing an instructive lesson under the

guise of a clever travesty of the old-fashioned style of *Sandford and Merton*, and of the pompousness of Mr. Barlow, who did not forget to back up Harry and snub Tommy, as was his habit. In December of the same year he published an article on American Leads in *Macmillan's Magazine*, and finally, after the pros and cons had been pretty thoroughly threshed out in the *Field*, he incorporated the whole system of American Leads in the sixteenth edition of his *Laws and Principles of Whist*, 1886, the recognized text-book of the whist-player. From that moment the future of those leads as a permanent feature of the game was assured.

The American Leads discussion in the *Field* was summed up by "Merry Andrew," one of the participants, in a pamphlet entitled "The American Lead Controversy." The title-page bore the motto: "*Vous savez les American Leads, jeune homme? Quelle* TRIST(*e*) *vieillesse vous vous préparez!*"—engrafting a pleasantry

on a parody of Talleyrand's well-known prediction of a cheerless old age to the youth who was ignorant of the game.

During this period Whist was advancing with rapid strides in other directions. Dr. Pole, applying his high mathematical and logical attainments to the solution of the question of second hand covering an honor with an honor, holding fewer than four in suit, published the results of his calculations in the *Field*, April 26, 1884, by which he demonstrated that the covering was disadvantageous. Since that period this time-honored practice has been abandoned.

In the *Field* of October 11, 1884, appeared the first of nine articles on "The Play of Third Hand," a masterly and exhaustive piece of whist analysis, by which "Cavendish" reduced the unblocking play to a system, called by him at the time "The Plain-Suit Echo," a designation which he soon afterwards changed to "The Unblocking Game." This consists in retaining the lowest card of your partner's

long suit, when you hold four exactly, by which play you often clear his suit and gain one or more tricks for the partnership. The typical case, and the one which emphasizes the method, owing to the commanding strength of the cards, is the king, queen, knave and one small combination, when you throw the knave to the ace led by your partner and afterwards "play up," even when your adversaries are trumping the suit after the first round, reserving the small card to the end.

An incident of this line of play is the showing of the number of cards you hold in your partner's suit. If a small card, say the two, which otherwise should have been played, does not appear on the second round, it is marked in your hand, bar the suppression of a call for trumps, and the holding by you of four cards in the suit is indicated. On the other hand, if, to the first round, you play the two, or its equivalent from your partner's point of view, he knows you have fewer than four. This opportunity to show number is al-

ways present, because, in this, as in other systems, the line of play indicated is persevered in, although the primary object of the method cannot be attained in some particular cases — for instance, with the five, four, three, and two of your partner's suit you cannot block it; and with four cards in sequence you cannot unblock it; still, you must play in a uniform manner and retain your lowest card to the last.

It happens, in this case, that the incident is a more important factor towards handling the suit with success than the play of which it is an adjunct, because the disclosing of number in his suit is frequently useful to your partner, while the unblocking results but seldom in any gain, owing to the circumstance that a card of re-entry makes it useless, or weakness in trumps renders it ineffectual.

Again, we find that our old friend Hoyle has laid the foundation for this other system. He writes: "We will now suppose your partner is to lead, and in the course of play it appears to you that your

partner has one great suit; suppose ace, king, and four small ones, and that you have queen, ten, nine, and a very small one of that suit; when your partner plays the ace, you are to play the nine; when he plays the king, you are to play the ten; by which means, you see, in the third round you make your queen, and, having a small one remaining, you do not obstruct your partner's great suit."

It appears, too, from the foregoing example, that Hoyle led the ace, with king and four small ones—a lead generally supposed to be a modern one.

The Play of Third Hand, together with American Leads and the new play of not covering an honor (except, of course, with the ace), as recommended by Dr. Pole, was embodied by "Cavendish" in his well-known work, *Whist Developments*, published in 1885.

In 1885 the sub-echo, or showing three trumps, was suggested by me to our whist circle. It was pronounced to be sound in theory, being an instance of pro-

gressiveness of whist language, and after some months' trial was adopted as a useful device. It is merely echoing after showing that you have not four trumps, by not echoing when you had the opportunity to do so, or by your return cards in the trump suit. There are several ways of sub-echoing; the simplest case is this: your partner leads a trump on which you play the two — you cannot therefore have four. A plain suit is opened, you echo, and you thus tell him you held three trumps originally.

"Cavendish" did not for several years give his sanction to the sub-echo, which was explained in a *Field* article, November 21, 1885; but when he did he suggested a modification, which is doubtless an improvement; it is to begin the sub-echo at once; for instance, my method was as follows: holding, say, the seven, five, and three in a plain suit, I played the three, then the seven, followed by the five on the third round, which completed the sub-echo. "Cavendish" said: "In my

opinion, you should play the five to the first round, the seven to the second round, and the three to the third round. If you are going to sub-echo, you may as well begin at once. Your partner, missing a very small card on the first and second rounds, may divine a sub-echo before it is completed; or, when you play the five, you may not have been able to show that you did not hold four trumps. Before you have occasion to play the suit again, this information may have been afforded. You can then complete the sub-echo on the second round, by next playing the three."

After discussion in the *Field*, during the year 1887, the lead of the knave, with ten, nine, four or more in suit was given up for the fourth-best.

As far back as February, 1884, "Cavendish" wrote to me as follows: "From king, queen, five in suit, might not queen be led? If queen wins, continue with small. This cannot be queen, knave, ten lead, or knave would be next lead; so it must be something else, viz., king, queen,

more than four in suit. . . . This may also necessitate reconsideration of leads from ace, king, five in suit. If ace is first led, then king, leader has at least three small ones; this lead has often been proposed, but at present the best players I know think the immediate demonstration of ace, king, more important than declaration of number." Although his conviction grew stronger every day that these leads were right—in fact, necessary—as adjuncts to the unblocking play, yet so great is his respect for British conservatism that four years elapsed before "Cavendish" formally recommended them in print, which he did ("in fear and quake," as he afterwards acknowledged) in three *Field* articles, the first appearing May 12, 1888. To his great surprise, however, his fears that these innovations would meet with violent opposition proved to be groundless. In the *Field* of December 28, 1889, he says: "I find that these leads are adopted all over the kingdom, not only by the minority, but by players to whom American

Leads are a sealed book, and who never dream of unblocking."

About the same time, I sent a letter to the *Field*, published in June, 1888, recommending and advocating, in a colloquial form, the lead of queen, with ace, king, and two or more small ones, and the lead of the knave, with ace, king, queen, and one or more small ones, which are leads replete with information, because the exceptional number of high indifferent cards enables one to show greater length in suit than can be accomplished with weaker combinations of the cards.

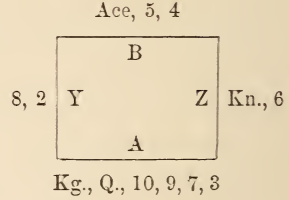
An important change in Maxim 2 of American Leads was rendered necessary by the introduction of the lead of the queen, with king and three or more small ones.

At the time that maxim was formulated the king was always led, with queen and any number of small cards of the suit, and the rule was to follow the king with *original* fourth-best, just as in the case of the ace. I saw that this would not work

with the new lead, and wrote to "Cavendish"—published in *Field*, August 25, 1888—in part, as follows:

"I am entirely in accord with you in everything you have said in regard to those leads (and the ones associated with them) except on one point, viz., as to following queen with original fourth-best.

"See what a mess B may make of it, by not knowing to a certainty the nature of A's lead.



"A leads queen, then nine (original fourth-best); as far as B knows, the lead may be from queen, knave, ten, nine. Now if B passes the nine, to capture the king, supposed to be in Y's hand, he loses the second trick and blocks A's suit. If Y holds knave with his other two cards,

the result is not quite so disastrous; still, bad enough, for A's suit is blocked.

"You will either have to make an exception with king, queen, ten, nine, or to abandon altogether the lead of original fourth-best, when queen is led from king, queen, more than four in suit. Rather than have any exceptions, I am in favor of the latter course—that is, with king, queen, three or more, lead queen, then fourth-best *remaining*. This would leave in leader's hand two cards, instead of one, higher than the card led; just as is the case in the ace lead followed by original fourth-best."

The second maxim was then recast to cover the case.

The now well-known *eleven* rule was first given to the public in the early part of 1890. It is a rule of thumb, resulting from the solution of a very simple arithmetical problem, by which the number of cards superior to the fourth-best led that are out against the leader may be quickly ascertained. This is done by deducting

the number of pips on the fourth-best card from eleven, the remainder giving the number of those higher cards. This has been derisively styled "playing whist by arithmetic." This rule was first worked out, as far back as 1881, by Mr. R. T. Foster, of New York, the clever whist author and teacher, who, however, did not divulge it, except in strict confidence to his pupils, and to a few other persons, "Cavendish" among them. It was afterwards independently formulated by Mr. E. F. M. Benecke, M.A., of Balliol College, Oxford, and made public in the *Field*, of January 4, 1890, by his friend Mr. Henry A. Cohen, who took occasion in his article to make some interesting observations on the play of second hand as affected by the fourth-best leads.

In three papers published in the *Field*, in March, April, and June, 1890, Mr. W. H. Whitfeld, M.A., the eminent mathematician—who as a whist analyst and a double-dummy composer is without a superior—investigated the old problem of

the play, second hand, with king and another in plain suits, taking into consideration the magnitude of the card led—a factor neglected by Dr. Pole in his analysis above referred to — obtaining practically the same result as the latter, that the small card is the more advantageous play, and which was further confirmed by the calculations made by Mr. A. R. Smith, B.A., made on entirely different lines, published in the *Field* about the same time.

These results, taken in conjunction with those already obtained by Dr. Pole, "Mogul," and "Pembridge," ought to settle definitely this troublesome question, were it not that a new and disturbing element has since come into play, which must modify the conclusions arrived at by those experts. I mean the new lead of the fourth-best card, from ace with four others, not the king or both queen and knave, which may equalize the chances for the play of either card, or, possibly, throw the balance of advantage on the side of the king.

In the early part of 1891 the culminating-point in the development of whist leads seems to have been reached, as appears from the contents of an important and comprehensive article which appeared in the *Field* of January 24th of that year, entitled "On the Leads of High Cards." The writer, who signed himself "A Believer in Whist Developments," who had with marked ability and fairness taken a prominent part in the discussion of American Leads, and who, as I have reason to know, was in close touch with "Cavendish," after referring to a paper by him—*Field*, November, 1890—in which he had proposed that with king, queen, knave, ten, and no small one, king should be led, followed with the ten, went on to say: "But I should like now to draw attention to the consequence of this lead. There are two analogous leads, viz., that from ace, queen, knave, ten, without any small card, and that from queen, knave, ten, nine, without any small card. Applying the same principle to these combinations, it

seems to me that ace, then ten, should show queen, knave, no small card remaining in leader's hand; and that queen, then nine, should show knave, ten remaining in the leader's hand. If this is approved of, the effect will be to simplify the leads from the high cards, and to enable the leader to communicate all the information required as to his suit, on the *second round*, in all cases where the suit is led twice by the same player. The necessity for laying down fixed rules for the card to lead on the third round of a suit is thus avoided, and this is as it should be, for after two rounds are out the leader must often be guided by the previous fall of the cards. As to the card to select for the third round, I should add that, though I saw the effect of the play on these two combinations, I did not observe its application to leads from high cards in general, until it was pointed out to me by "Cavendish."

The writer then proceeded to run through all the various leads from high cards, mak-

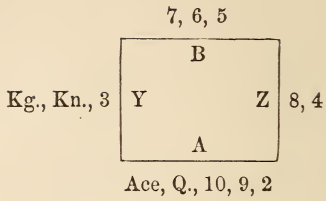
ing it plain that in every instance the third hand gains on the second round all the knowledge required of the combination of cards which his partner held originally in the suit opened by him.

These leads had the important effect of doing away with the third-lead complication, explained in a preceding example; and they are so sound and simple that they have remained practically unchanged to this day. They were, shortly after the appearance of "Believer's" article, published by "Cavendish" in a pamphlet, entitled *American Leads Simplified.*

Let me here remark that the term "American Leads" was originally applied by "Cavendish" to those leads embraced under the three maxims herein stated. At present the entire system of modern leads is generally referred to as "American Leads." This is not correct, for nearly all the leads from high cards had their origin in England; the second and third maxims of American Leads being grafted on them to regulate the lead on the sec-

ond round. Therefore it would be but just and proper that the system, as a whole, be called the *Anglo-American Leads.*

In a *Field* article, January 2, 1892, "Believer in Whist Developments" expressed his doubts as regards the advantage of the second maxim of American Leads, because of the very precise information often given by the fourth-best following the ace, which enabled second hand to finesse with success. I anticipated something of the kind, for "Cavendish" had several months before written to me that many of the best players had given up the second maxim, for the reasons set forth by "Believer." "Cavendish" himself then took up the subject, and after discussing it in four *Field* articles, the first of which appeared April 2, 1892, arrived at the conclusion that we would have to return to the old play, of leading lowest after the ace. In support of his contention he drew particular attention to the following position:



A leads the ace, followed by the nine, on which Y finesses the knave—owing to information afforded by the play of the nine—thus gaining a trick and blocking A's suit. This position is the bugbear of the opponents of the second maxim, which otherwise would probably never have been opposed.

And right here it may be pertinent to ask, if the lead of the nine after the ace is disadvantageous, why is the lead of the nine before the ace not equally so, under the same condition as to the holding of second hand?

"Believer's" article had elicited an answer from Mr. W. S. Fenollosa, of Salem, Massachusetts—*Field*, February 3, 1892—who, although he did not agree, ended his

letter by saying: "If the lead of ace, and then the fourth-best, is to be changed, I trust the amendment will be, 'ace and then the fifth-best,' by which method suits of five cards can be easily distinguished from suits of more than five." "Cavendish" said that Mr. Fenollosa was right, and he adopted his suggestion. He did this the more readily because the second maxim would still hold good, in this case, under the same rule applied to the lead with king, queen, three or more others. "Cavendish" makes an exception, however, for the combination of ace, knave, ten, nine, and one or more small, when he follows ace with the nine, not as a fourth-best, but as a "card of protection." Why the nine, with ace, queen, ten, is not also a card of protection, has never been very clear to me.

Before discussing the matter, I may say in a general way that there is not a single rule at whist, even the simplest, which may not cause an occasional loss, either from the position of the cards, or from information conveyed by the play and taken

advantage of by the adversaries. No immunity from the operation of this general exception is claimed for American Leads. It is therefore to be expected that positions unfavorable to those leads will sometimes occur. The question is, on which side does the balance of advantage lie in the long run?

The advantage of the play is, that it enables partner—

I. To unblock leader's suit in some positions of the cards.

II. To ascertain early in the play when leader's suit is established.

The disadvantage is, that second hand may profit by the information imparted by the lead and make a successful finesse, as exemplified in the foregoing diagram. In the examination of the subject it will be convenient to designate leader, second, third, and fourth hands respectively as A, Y, B, and Z.

To ascertain the comparative frequency, advantage, and disadvantage of the finessing and unblocking positions, the deter-

mining of which would go far towards solving the question, involves the consideration of so many factors that it would be no cause for surprise if a Pole or a Whitfeld should hesitate to grapple mathematically so complex a problem. In default of such a solution, I shall present briefly the main arguments in support of the retention of the second maxim.

In the first place, it is evident that the change from the fourth to the fifth best has not entirely done away with the information directing Y to finesse successfully, but has only reduced the number of positions in which the dreaded contingency will occur. If the fourth and fifth best are in sequence, or if there is a break of one card in the sequence, and that card is held by Y or falls on the first round, the finesse is still on. For example, add the eight to A's cards, in foregoing diagram, or the seven, giving Y the eight, or the latter card falling from B's or Z's hand, and Y can finesse the knave just the same on the second round. Those who play "by arith-

metic" can use a *ten-rule* in cases of leads of the fifth-best, based on a calculation similar to that which established the *eleven-rule* in cases of leads of the fourth-best.

In the second place, as can be easily demonstrated, the unblocking positions allow of a more general distribution of the cards among the players than the finessing positions, therefore it follows that the opportunity presents itself more frequently for unblocking than for finessing. This advantage is no doubt, to a certain extent, counterbalanced by the fact that the unblocking coup has been played in vain when the original leader is left with a card of re-entry at the opportune moment. Again, B may trump the third round of the suit, neutralizing the advantage of the finesse.

Another point which may also be noted in favor of unblocking is that sometimes two and even three tricks are gained by it, while the finesse will seldom result in a gain of more than one trick.

My personal experience is that both the

finessing and unblocking positions present themselves at very rare intervals. When "Cavendish" first wrote to me that the second maxim would probably be abandoned, I began to watch, both as player and as a looker-on, for the occurrence of the finesse position of king, knave, one small, against ace, queen, ten, nine, and small. It was two years and a half before it happened. The rarity of the occurrence is somewhat increased by the fact that the position might be present, but, if Y is in the lead before A, he may lead from the king, knave, and two others, if it is his strongest suit.

Conceding that the advantages and disadvantages of the finessing and unblocking features about balance, there is left the very considerable advantage in favor of the lead of original fourth-best that it frequently enables B to ascertain on the first or second round that his partner's suit is established, thus guiding him to a successful play of the hand by a timely lead of trumps. For the above

reasons I have always followed the second maxim as originally formulated. I am pleased to know that I have, in that respect, the support of Mr. C. D. P. Hamilton, the distinguished whist author, who, after an exhaustive analysis of the question, made on some of the lines above noted, and which was published in *Whist* in 1895, reached the conclusion that "the advantages attending the practical application of the second maxim of American Leads are overwhelming as compared with the disadvantages."

The question will lose much of the importance which may be attached to it if the lead of the fourth-best, from ace, five in suit, now undergoing probation, should be generally adopted.

With the incident of this disputed amendment the history of American Leads closes. If I have gone into many details which may have proved wearisome to my readers, I beg their indulgence because of the end in view, which was to bring to their cognizance the fact

that those leads, which are comprehended in three short maxims, did not spring suddenly into existence, but were gradually worked out and erected into a harmonious system only after years of patient investigation and trial, aided by intelligent discussion, and stimulated by a stubborn opposition.

It is evident from the foregoing that Whist made great progress in the three decades preceding the year 1892. The general tendency of improvement has been towards defining and generalizing the principles inherent to the game, with the result of systematizing the play, which, in turn, has assisted to further the interests of the combination of partnership hands, which Dr. Pole justly considers to be the broad fundamental principle on which the modern scientific game is based.

Part III

Later American Whist Innovations

IT was my intention, when I began this little work, to confine myself to the history of American Leads, but having been repeatedly asked by many players for an opinion on the later American whist innovations, I decided to avail myself of the present opportunity to comply with their request by briefly reviewing the whole subject.

About ten or twelve years ago the American people seemed to have awakened to the fact that there was such a game as scientific whist. Their attention was doubtless first drawn to it by the publication in 1887 of *Whist Universal*, by the late George W. Pettes, the first American book on the game, which, however, owing to the vagaries of the author, in conjunction with an absurd code of laws, had but a short-lived influence on the

methods of play. The game soon sprang into general favor, and the interest in the pastime grew and expanded until it culminated in the convening of the first American Whist Congress in 1891, followed by the organization of the American Whist League, the enactment and adoption of an excellent code of laws, and the monthly publication of an ably edited journal, *Whist*, devoted to the interest of the game, and now the official organ of the League.*

The introduction of Duplicate Whist, with all necessary appliances and schedules for play, ingeniously worked out by Mr. John T. Mitchell, Mr. Edwin C. Howell, and others, by which the element of luck was reduced to a minimum, has done much to increase the popularity of the game, making possible the contests

* All whist-players owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Eugene S. Elliott, who was zealously seconded by Mr. Theodore Schwarz, for inaugurating and bringing to a successful issue the movement which resulted in the accomplishment of these ends.

for trophies, inaugurated and conducted by the American Whist League and other kindred associations.

As was to be expected from their progressive and inventive turn of mind, our countrymen, as soon as they began to take an interest in the game, set to work to improve it, with what success it shall be my present aim to show.

The more modern American Whist developments or innovations may be divided into three classes:

I. Entirely new plays, such as the irregular opening lead to demand a trump from partner through a turned-up honor; the four-trumps signal, and other methods of showing strength in trumps; the echo with high cards; the three-echo; the signal of holding command of a suit when trumps are out; various new modes of discarding, etc.

II. Modifications in the heretofore recognized leads, viz., the fourth-best from suits of more than four cards headed by the ace, without the king or both queen and

knave. The fourth-best from the king, knave, ten combination. The ten from the queen, knave, ten combination, etc.

III. New systems.

NEW PLAYS

An examination of the cases coming under this class brings out forcibly the fact that every other inventor seems to have a craze to give information of some kind about his trump suit, by his lead in a plain suit, or by some modification of the natural order of playing the cards.

These various schemes for showing four trumps by the four-signal, by changing the usual order of the cards in leading, by the original lead of a high card from a short suit, and by the lead of a very small card, will not, it is safe to assert, prove successful in the majority of cases. This declaration of strength in trumps is, of course, an advantage when partner has such a good hand as will justify an immediate trump lead; but it is two to one that he will not hold such cards, and in

that case it is hard to imagine a more helpless position for the two partners to be in. If their hands are not slaughtered it is because their adversaries are not players of a calibre to take advantage of the information that one of the opponents is strong in trumps, with probably no very good plain suit, and that the other has so weak a hand that he dare not lead trumps after his partner has declared strength in them. The call for trumps is not a parallel case, as it is a command to partner for a trump lead and for a generally aggressive game.

An irregular lead, as a call for trumps through a turned-up honor, is one of the schemes which seems to have taken the popular fancy. Especially does it appear advantageous when the irregular card is one from the long suit of the leader, who therefore does not have to depart from the important principle of opening from his strong suit, in the attempt to accomplish the end in view. At first I rather

liked the scheme, but after giving it a trial I have come to the conclusion that, in the long-run, this method of play is a trick-loser. Its successful application depends on several contingencies, therefore rendering the favorable position of rare occurrence. For instance, take the case of the king turned up which is doubly guarded. The leader, holding ace, queen, nine, and two small trumps, and a plain suit of five cards, say king, knave, nine, eight, and one small one, leads the nine of the plain suit. In the first place, his partner must be able to read that this is an irregular lead; then he must hold the knave of trumps with at least one small one in order to hem in the king—a combination of circumstances which does not occur often. If third player holds any other two trumps, nothing is gained by the play, and delay is incurred. In the meanwhile the adversaries, who see the plan of operation, try to make, and often succeed in making, one or more trumps by returning the leader's long suit and playing for a cross-ruff. They

also hasten to "pick out the plums" by making their aces and kings, in view of the strong game disclosed by the demand for a trump lead through the turned-up honor, which, after all, is not often caught.

The advantage of echoing on partner's lead of a small trump, by playing the ace, then the king—or the king, then the queen, when the ace is turned up by him or by the adversary on your right — had long been apparent, but the method was not extended to other cases for fear of upsetting partners' calculations by the temporary declaration that you do not hold the card next lowest to the one with which you have attempted to take the trick. For example, take the case of king and queen; the king is won by the ace, and your partner places the queen anywhere but with you, and the management of his hand is consequently seriously hampered. One day it dawned upon me that the solution of the difficulty was a simple one, the nature of the play itself being sug-

gestive of the remedy. It is to extend the ordinary inference drawn from the rank of the card with which third hand has attempted to win the trick so as to include the possible holding by him of the card *next lowest, as well as the one next highest*, to the one played by him. This exceptional extension of inference does away with the heretofore existing objection, and echoing can now be accomplished with any two cards in sequence at the head of the trump suit without danger of puzzling your partner. This was pointed out by me in an article published in the Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, in March, 1894.

The three-echo is an innovation first proposed by Dr. H. E. Greene in the March, 1895, *Whist*. Its object is to show three trumps instead of four, by echoing immediately. Presented originally in rather a crude form, it has since developed under the investigations and suggestions of other whist students; but there seems as yet no generally accepted manner of

playing it. Some substitute it integrally for the four-echo; others use it with the smaller cards, but echo four trumps at once with the high indifferent cards. Again, a class of players echo immediately with three or four trumps; this, supplemented with a subsequent echo in a plain suit to show more than three trumps, is, in my opinion, a method far superior to the others. With four or more small trumps the echo is begun with second-best, followed by the third-best; the absence of the small trump or trumps from those played being depended on to show number. The play of false cards, which is excellent whist tactics on adverse trump leads, will often render this scheme nugatory.

The three-echo, in one or another of its forms, is, as I understand, widely used throughout the country. The presumption from this is that it has been found advantageous as compared with the four-echo; but no conclusive proof of that fact has yet been furnished to the whist-play-

ing public. The stock argument in support of the three-echo is that three trumps are held oftener than four; therefore you can inform your partner more frequently of the holding of three trumps than you can of the holding of four or five. This is true; but it does not necessarily follow, nor has it been demonstrated, that any superior advantage can be attributed to that circumstance. The force of that argument is, to a considerable extent, weakened by the fact that in a majority of cases a third round of trumps will be played anyhow by the original leader or by his partner; consequently, the information imparted by the three-echo proves to be quite useless, and might as well not have been given.

By using a table prepared by Mr. Whitfeld for some of his analytical whist work, I find that in one hundred deals, when a player holds five trumps—which is the number generally led from—his partner will hold three trumps thirty-one times, and four or five trumps twenty-three

times; a difference of eight, which represents the number of times that he will be able to show three trumps in excess of the number of times that he can show four or five trumps in the hundred deals.

Now it must be conceded that out of those thirty-one hands in which the holding of three trumps is shown, in at least eight of them that showing—for the reason assigned above—might as well not have been made, as far as any advantage to be derived from it is concerned. This excess of eight hands can therefore be eliminated from the consideration of the case, leaving an equal number of hands for each holding; and there can be no question as to the greatly superior advantage, in an equal number of cases, of the four-echo over the three-echo, the function of which being, to a considerable extent, performed by the present sub-echo.

Of course, the three-echo proves useful on many occasions, but the question is, on what side does the balance of advantage lie as compared with the four-echo?

The distribution of the cards most favorable for the three-echo is the comparatively rare one where the leader holds six trumps, his partner three, and each of the adversaries two. The weak point —and the case occurs quite frequently— is when the leader, uncertain as between the holding of two or four trumps by his partner, has to take the chances either of drawing one of his partner's trumps or allowing one or two trumps to remain in the adversaries' hands, with perhaps disastrous results in either case.

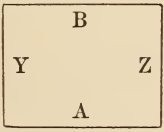
The three-card echo is now undergoing the test of experience, and until a more favorable light is thrown on the subject I shall rest content with the four-card echo and its supplement, the sub-echo.

The "change-your-suit" signal, introduced by General Drayson, and explained in the first part of this work, is generally used in this country to indicate command of the suit, a meaning just the reverse of that intended by its originator. I have

always given preference to the "change-your-suit" signification, because of the positive direction which it can give to a partner to do a certain thing, viz., change the suit, while the other method indicates to him a fact only—command of the suit. I will attempt to show how this difference helps the argument in favor of the Drayson method.

There are positions where, although you do not hold the command of the suit being led, you want it continued, as a change of suit might prove disadvantageous. To illustrate:

8, 7, 6.....C
Ace, Q.....D

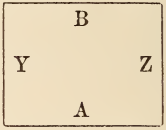


Ace, Kg., 9.....C
9, 8.....D

A leads the king of clubs, followed by the ace, on which B plays the six and seven respectively. Although B has not the best

club left, he does not ask his partner to change the suit, because if Z gets the lead on the third round, B is sure of two tricks in diamonds. Now an American player, to attain the same end, would have to make believe he held the queen of clubs, by giving the signal to induce his partner to continue the suit. Another case:

Ace, Q.....D
Q., 6, 2.....C



9, 8.....D
Ace, Kg., 9.....C

In this case, although B has the best club, he requests his partner to change the suit by playing the six and two of clubs respectively on the king and ace led by A, because it would be an obvious disadvantage to him if he gets in on the next round, when he would have to lead from his ace, queen tenace. Again, the Amer-

ican player would have to simulate weakness by abstaining from giving the signal, in order that A may change the suit. In both cases the Drayson B tells his partner directly what to do. The American B is obliged to have recourse to pretence in order that his partner may inferentially play to the best advantage. It is true that the result may be the same in either case, but can there be two opinions as to which of these methods is better fit to become a component part of the structure of scientific whist?

The discard has not escaped the improvement mania, and several new schemes have been invented, which are being used by whist-players according to their fancy. So far none of them has proved superior in efficacy to the old system founded on sound principles—that is, to discard from weakness in the absence of any indication of trump strength on either side, or when partner has shown such strength, and to discard from your best-protected suits

when the adversaries are strong in trumps. It may turn out, however, that your partner is superior in trump power to the adversary who has led them; in which case you discard from your weak suit. This constitutes a system which, in conjunction with the Drayson reverse discard, covers the ground better than any yet devised, especially if you bear in mind that the discard is not a *command* from partner to play any one suit, as most players seem to understand it. Inferentially, you get the information that he is weak or strong in some particular suit, and it is for you to exercise judgment as to which one it is better to lead, taking into consideration your own cards and the existing condition of the game generally; not forgetting that, when the adversary on your right has the lead, your partner's discard may be a deceptive one, to induce a lead to his best suit.

The proper play, under circumstances involving discards and the inferences to be drawn therefrom, is one of consider-

able difficulty, and it requires an intelligent perception of the game in both partners to grapple with the situation successfully.

There is one method of discarding which cannot be dismissed with a mere passing mention, because, owing probably to its unique character, it proves attractive to the average whist-player. I refer to what is known as the *rotary* discard, the object of which is to show one's strong suit by a single discard. It was first suggested, in January, 1895, *Whist*, by Mr. P. J. Tormey, the father of whist on the Pacific slope, who says that the idea was taken from a Mexican game. The end in view is accomplished by throwing away a card from a suit which conventionally indicates strength in another suit, following in a certain agreed-upon rotation. The usual arrangement is spades, hearts, clubs, and diamonds; therefore a discard of a spade means that hearts is the strong suit; if hearts happen to be trumps, then the next suit, clubs, is the strong one.

Of all the arbitrary conventional methods of play this takes the palm, and on that account alone should not be countenanced by any one who desires to see the game of whist maintained, as far as it can be accomplished, on the scientific lines on which it has been gradually constructed. Apart from this view of the question, which may be considered as mere sentiment, I think that an examination of its practical side will show that there is no advantage in that mode of discarding.

An evident objection is, that the discard is always from weakness, which is contrary to the well-recognized maxim of the game, to keep guards to the high cards in your short suits when the opponents have disclosed strength in trumps. The impossibility of observing that maxim under this system of discarding may cause the loss of many a trick, by enabling one of the adversaries to establish and bring in a long suit.

Another objection is, that sometimes you cannot discard from the indicator

suit without probable or certain loss. Suppose you hold the ace and king, or king and queen, of spades, you surely will not discard one of them to show that hearts is your strong suit. You are then forced to another discard, which will lead your partner astray as to the constitution of your hand. The same difficulty will present itself when you are void of the indicator suit, or when you hold only one card of your partner's declared or presumed suit, and that card belongs to the indicator suit. All of which goes to show that any rule of play intended to convey information not only ceases to be valuable, but becomes actually detrimental if it cannot be strictly adhered to under all circumstances.

The occasion for the use of this method of discarding can present itself but rarely, for the following reasons: The original lead of the hand must be trumps, otherwise one plain suit will have been led, and you can show your strong suit in the usual way by discarding from one or the other

of the remaining plain suits. Then you must hold just one trump less than the number of leads which will be made consecutively, otherwise you will get two discards, and thus indicate your strong suit; and, also, if there is a break in the trump leads, a plain suit will be opened by the adversary, and you can show yours without any necessity to rotate. This is also the case when your partner is so long in trumps that he can afford to play an extra round for the sole purpose of giving you a second discard, by which he may ascertain your strong suit. Again, when the trump lead comes from the adversary, you can under the recognized system disclose your strong suit at once by a single discard; therefore there is no advantage for the "rotary" in that case.

It is evident, therefore, that the opportunity to make use of the rotary discard will present itself at very rare intervals, and when it does it comes burdened always with one permanent source of weakness, and occasionally trammelled with the un-

favorable holding already pointed out, which more than neutralizes any advantage claimed for it.

For these reasons, when you are threading the discard maze, ride not the unreliable Mexican wheel.

The discard has been put to a new use, as appears by the following extract from an article published in December, 1898, *Whist:* "If partner discards, whether second, third, or fourth in hand, a card lower than a five-spot, say; he indicates his willingness to be forced, while his discard of a five or higher card indicates his disinclination to use his trumps for forcing purposes."

This device embodies another convention, pure and simple, and on that account is to be deprecated; but viewed on its merits, it is doubtful that it will prove advantageous in the long-run, for, in common with the rotary discard and many of the new-fangled notions, it requires what might be styled "hands made to order" to insure success; otherwise you may be

obliged to discard a higher card than a four from your weak suit when you are anxious to ruff, or a lower card than the five when you desire not to be forced. A misfit, which might cost you dear, and which, perhaps, can only be avoided by using a card from your long suit to throw away, thus seriously impairing its efficacy, besides misleading your partner as to your best suit. Again, the mandate on partner is not without its dangerous side, especially when an adversary has the lead. In case you signal a desire to be forced, he will, of course, discontinue the suit, and a trump attack by the adversary on your left is indicated; in the reverse case, the force will be given and your trump strength may be irretrievably impaired. However, players who use these signals claim that they are trick-winners. Experience will show if the claim is well founded, or if it is, at present, based merely on the want of familiarity with the system by the opponents of the players habitually using it.

One thing is certain—inventions of this kind are knocking all the brains out of Whist. It was a nice question of perception to decide when to force and when not to force one's partner under conditions which, on the surface, would not justify the one or the other play, according to the elementary rules which regulate the force.

It is an old and sound rule in whist to keep the adversaries in ignorance as regards your holding in their strong suits, whenever it is possible to do so without confusing your partner. But it seems that this was all wrong, for we now have an invention called—after its originator—the *Street Attachment*, by which very precise information is given to an opponent concerning his strong suit. My opinion of this device can be best expressed by the declaration that my heart warms to the adversary who kindly informs me, in accordance with that method, that he holds three cards of my suit without an honor,

by playing the middle, then highest, followed by lowest of the suit; or that he holds four, by playing lowest, then a higher card; or that he has the ability to win the third round, either with an honor or with a trump, by playing any card followed by a lower one.

Those who practise the Street Attachment are beginning to realize the dangers attending the play, which they are trying to avoid by taking refuge behind false cards, with the difficult task on their hands of informing their partners that they have sought cover, and at the same time of concealing that fact from their opponents.

Another serious objection to the invention is that any one using it cannot call for trumps in the adversary's suit, as the play of unnecessarily high cards is used to impart the information regarding the third round, explained above.

There are other fads, too numerous and insignificant to review. As regards one of

the latest of them, however, I must remark that the climax of conventionalism in whist appears to have been reached by that school of players who never lead the ace with four others — not the king or both queen and knave — unless they hold a singleton in another suit!

MODIFIED LEADS

Another American innovation is the lead of fourth-best from suits of five or more cards headed by the ace, but not containing the king or both queen and knave. This was first practised by the celebrated Minneapolis Duplicate Whist team, and upon their high recommendation as an improvement on the old lead of the ace it has been extensively tried, and has found many adherents.

Public opinion became so pronounced in its favor as to impel Mr. Whitfeld to investigate the matter. After a most exhaustive analysis of the case of the ace with four small ones, published in nine *Field* articles in 1894, and which involved,

among other things, the consideration of ten different factors which affect the problem, he worked out a slight advantage of seven tricks in a thousand deals in favor of the lead of the small card.

Mr. Whitfeld concluded his examination with some instructive comments which my readers will no doubt prefer to have in his own words. They are as follows:

"This balance is extremely small, and it must further be pointed out that the indirect gains are chiefly connected with the establishment of the suit, and will not often make the difference of the odd trick, which counts double. I regret that I cannot arrive at a more conclusive opinion, but with strict impartiality I cannot state the case more definitely than as follows: By leading a small card the player incurs a very small probable loss, in return for which, by retaining the ace, he has more command over the course of play of the hand, resulting in a better chance of bringing in his long suit and a decreased chance of the adversaries doing

so; and that, subject to certain conditions, this advantage of keeping the command will just compensate him for the small risk of losing a trick through not leading the ace. One of the conditions is that the hand should be played early in the game, so that the chance of establishing the suit is an important factor. Late in the game, when only a few points are required to win or save it, it is of more importance to make tricks early; it is then better to lead the ace than to play a waiting game, giving a better chance of bringing in a suit. The player must have a good partner, who will assist him by returning the suit instead of opening a suit of his own of moderate strength. Further, he must be a good player himself, able to profit by the command of the suit. It is often a true instinct which prompts bad players to make tricks early.

"There are circumstances in which the fourth-best can certainly be led with advantage, viz., when the leader has good strength in trumps, but is not sufficiently

strong to justify an original trump lead. It is then better to lead the small card, partly because the player is more likely to obtain the lead at a later stage, when a trump lead may be desirable; partly because leading two rounds of the suit at once is more likely to give the adversaries a chance of ruffing the suit.

"To sum up the case, though a small card can be led early in the game, and, with a good partner, without probable loss, and under some circumstances with advantage, yet there cannot be laid down a general law in favor of the lead of the fourth-best; and in advanced stages of the score the lead of the ace must be adhered to.

"I may add a word on the question of the lead from ace, queen, with five in suit. On the whole, the arguments are rather stronger for the lead of the ace. There is no danger of giving the complete command of the suit to the adversaries, and if the third hand plays the king to the ace the loss is not so great. On the other

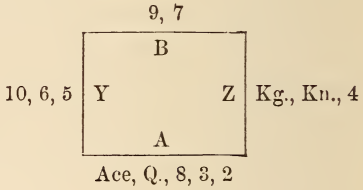
hand, the suit being stronger and more likely to be established, there is a greater advantage in being able to obtain the lead on the second round, as will be the case when a small card is led. I think that with this combination also a small card should be led when the player is strong in trumps.

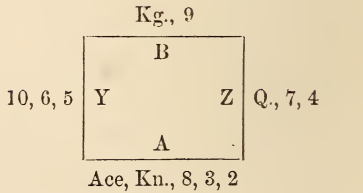
"I think it may be said generally of the leads from a suit headed by the ace without the king, or both queen and knave, that though with a certain class of hands a small card may be led with advantage, under most circumstances the better lead is the ace."

The result of Mr. Whitfeld's arduous labor does not sustain the claim made by American players of a decided advantage consequent upon the lead of the fourth-best; for, according to him, it is about an even thing between the two lines of play. This may be due to the fact that the only consideration he gave to the case of an honor being held with the ace was what is contained in the few lines quoted above in

regard to the holding of the queen; for he had only undertaken to examine the case of the ace with four small cards. Consequently he did not look into the question of the possible gainful finesses which occasionally present themselves when the queen or the knave is held with the ace.

Suppose the cards to lie as in the following diagrams:

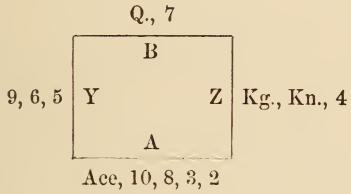


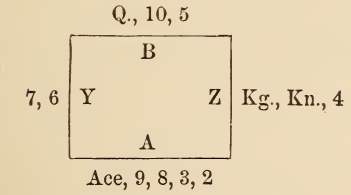


Here, as can be readily seen, are finessing positions where, with trump strength, A and B may possibly make a gain of four tricks in one case and of three tricks

in the other; and when it is borne in mind that the American player, if strong in trumps, leads the fourth-best of his ace suit as readily with six or seven in suit as he does with five, the possible gain may be still greater.

Even without an honor accompanying the ace there are finessing positions which might yield the same advantage; for example, take the following cases:





These positions, favorable to the lead of the fourth-best, do occur sometimes;

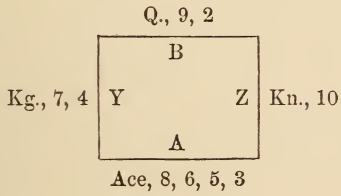
still Mr. Whitfeld appears not to have given them due weight, for he disposes of the finesse question with the following remarks:

"I have taken no account of finessing, first, because the balance of gains and losses from finessing is usually very small; secondly, because this small balance will probably be nearly equal in the two methods of play, and the balance of the balances, so to speak, may be expected to be extremely small."

The first part of this proposition is correct when the balance is between one trick lost or gained by the finesse; but the case is different when the successful finesse results not only in the capture of the second-best card, but at the same time establishes and brings in the suit—a possible gain of several tricks as against the loss of probably but one trick in case the cards do not lie favorably for the finesse. As to the second proposition, I cannot find, after the lead of the ace, positions for finessing comparable as to possible favor-

able results to those which may occur when the lead is the fourth-best.

There is another case favorable to the lead of the small card—it is when the player, having no card of re-entry excepting the ace, passes the second round. Examine this position:



A leads the five, Y plays the four, B the queen, Z the ten; B now leads trumps, and succeeds in exhausting them from all the hands. B gets in and leads the nine; Z plays the knave; A passes the trick, as the two is marked in B's hand and king is guarded on his left. When B obtains the lead again, he plays the two, and A gets his two weaklings home, under the protecting wing of his ace. With the above distribution of the cards, four tricks

are made in the suit by A B under the assumed circumstances of the case. If the ace is led, only two can be taken by them, and probably only one, for the queen will be lost if Y forces his partner. Although such positions as the above occur very rarely, and the finessing positions present themselves with but limited frequency, as experience demonstrates, still they are factors not to be ignored in determining the balance of advantage in the two leads.

I have made these points not without misgivings, for I am aware that Mr. Whitfeld usually goes to the bottom of any question which he investigates, and he may bring me up with a round turn by pointing out that all the cases suggested by me are covered, directly or indirectly, by his analysis.

Admitting, however, that it is about an even thing between the two leads, as Mr. Whitfeld makes it out, I give preference to the fourth-best lead generally, because of its affording greater scope for interesting play, as explained above; such as finess-

ing or passing the second trick, as the best or only chance of bringing in the remainder of the long suit with the ace on the third round.

Another new lead which is now much in vogue is the opening of a long suit from the top, when not containing an honor. The advantage for this mode of play is that if your partner, from his holding and from the fall of the cards, recognizes the nature of the lead, he will be prevented from sacrificing a good card. For instance, you lead the nine, the highest of a four-card suit, and your partner, having the king, queen, and ten, holds the trick with the queen. He sees that you have led from the "top of nothing," as it is called, and does not send his king to slaughter.

The objections to the play are:

First. If partner, from your lead, reads your suit as the orthodox strong one, he will venture on a trump lead, which may turn out badly, or, being uncertain, he is

deterred from making an otherwise judicious trump attack when the lead happens to be from a long, strong suit.

Second. The disclosing of weakness in the long suit—always considered a disadvantage—directs the right-hand adversary to keep finessing.

Third. The suit may ultimately be commanded by a card in adverse hand lower than the top card led originally.

It looks as if the disadvantage attending the new play outweighs the advantage.

Another innovation which has met with favor, and which, I regret to say, has received the endorsement of the last Whist Congress, is the lead of the ten from queen, knave, ten, instead of the queen as usually practised. The object of the change is to avoid the dual signification of the queen lead from the ascending and descending sequences. This is in the direction of simplification, which is in itself desirable; but, as a consequence of the

change, the lead of the ten had to be abandoned from the king, knave, ten combination, and the fourth-best substituted; otherwise we would have two ten leads instead of two queen leads, and nothing would be gained in the way of simplification.

In my opinion the lead of the fourth-best from king, knave, ten, in plain suits, is a trick-loser, and is not compensated for by any presumed advantage resulting from the suppression of one of the queen leads; for its present dual signification is very seldom a source of embarrassment to the leader's partner, as the holding of the king or knave or ten by him, or the fall of one of these tell-tale cards from the adversaries' hands on the first round, will disclose the holding led from. Failing this, the second lead from the suit will settle that point; information which comes in ample time for any useful purpose, for the showing of five cards by the first lead, except when knave is led, is of no practical advantage, because the unblocking

by partner is always begun on the first round.

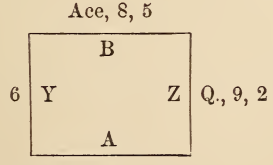
The reason for the century-old lead of the ten, from king, knave, ten, is to prevent an adversary from taking the first trick with a card lower than the ten, and the certainty of commanding the suit on the third round. But the greatest advantage resulting from the lead is the disclosure of the holding of such strong cards as the king and knave, which may induce partner to make a successful trump attack, which he would not attempt when a fourth-best from the leader would have left him in ignorance as to the strength of the latter's suit. I have in mind many instances where, holding ace, queen, one or more others, I have taken my partner's ten and led trumps, with strength in them, and made great scores.

The champions of these two leads advance the argument of "too much information" against the present ten lead, by which second hand, with ace, queen, and small, or with the queen and one other, is

directed to cover the ten led with the queen.

This advantage to second player is not so great as might be imagined; with queen, one small, a trick is generally gained if fourth hand has the ace; yet if fourth-best is led, the queen singly guarded may still make against the finesse of the knave. The information redounds also to the benefit of the leader, for if his ten is not covered by the queen he has an advantageous finesse of the knave, in case he is strong enough in trumps to hazard it, for he knows that he cannot possibly capture the queen, if to his left, because it must have been at least twice guarded originally.

In some occasional positions he will have a sure finesse. To illustrate:



First trick—ten, six, ace, two.

Second trick—B returns eight, Z plays the nine; A now knows—bar a possible call for trumps by Y—that Z has the queen, because if Y had it he would have covered the ten on the first round, with only two in suit; so he finesses the knave, remaining with the full control of his suit.

As to the case of ace, queen, and small in second hand, both of those high cards would make anyhow if third player has three cards of the suit; and in many cases it is a positive advantage to the leader to have the queen and ace played on the first two rounds, leaving him with his suit unobstructed.

As my long experience has convinced me that the ten is the best lead from the king, knave, ten combination, I give my unqualified adherence to it.

In trumps, however, with only four in suit, I consider the low card the better lead generally, as it may be of great importance to command the fourth round,

and thus have the power to extract the last trumps from the opponents.

As a consequence of the foregoing views, I cannot endorse the lead of ten from queen, knave, ten, as it is susceptible of demonstration that the two ten leads cannot coexist without creating confusion.

As far back as September, 1867, "Mogul" advocated in the *Field* the lead of the ten from queen, knave, ten, and two or more small ones. The American player leads the ten also, with four in suit as well as with more—showing number on the second round in the usual way, with the indifferent high cards.

Owing to the short time which has elapsed since the introduction of the fourth-best lead from the king, knave, ten combination, there has been no real test of the comparative merits of the two leads, nor will there ever be any, if everybody takes to leading the fourth-best.

It has been proposed to change the lead, from the ace, king, queen, knave, five or

more in suit, from the knave to the queen, so that the lead of the knave would always deny the ace. In my opinion, the change would not be advisable, because, under the present system, the partner of the leader has the advantage of knowing after the first round of the suit that the latter holds the ace, while the adversaries cannot place it; and it cannot be gainsaid that, at whist, any line of play is advantageous which gives information to partner to the exclusion of the opponents. Now make the knave deny the ace, and you lose the advantage and transfer it, as it were, to the other side. Suppose, for example, that one of the adversaries trumps the suit; the ace being marked with leader's partner, the ruff can be safely continued as long as the ace does not fall.

The only advantage which has been claimed for the proposed change is that leader's partner will know if the ace is held back. This knowledge would be of very little practical value to him; it is the leader to whom it might prove of some

importance, and he cannot know. Besides, this line of play is seldom resorted to on original leads from plain suits, as it is not considered good whist.

The advantage of the proposed change being practically *nil*, and the disadvantage being marked, I see no reason for abandoning the present lead of the knave, because the ace is included in the sequence.

NEW SYSTEMS

American inventive genius soon tired of wasting its resources on the minor details of the game, and nothing short of the creation of new systems could now satisfy its vaulting ambition. The result is systems sufficient to gratify all tastes. Among the most notable are the Howell system, the short-suit system, and the various modified derivatives from the latter. A full definition and explanation of them all would fill a volume, the perusal of which would probably leave the reader in a state of mind bordering on distraction if he attempted to master their arbi-

trary rules, to reconcile their contradictions, and to harmonize their clashing conventions.

It is safe to predict that the Howell system, as well as others based on purely arbitrary conventions, must eventually go to the wall. Among the many good reasons for this is the fact that, to work them successfully, one must hold hands made to order. In systems where every card led originally is invested with a certain definite meaning regarding the suit led from and the general character of the leader's hand, and the particular card which should convey that information is lacking from the hand, another card must be led which, having a totally different signification, will deceive the partner, with the consequent loss of tricks, and, worse still, the loss of confidence in the whole disjointed contrivance.

The short-suit system, called by its exponents the "common-sense game," to distinguish it, I presume, from the fool game

of Clay, Pole, Cavendish, Drayson, Ames, Hamilton, Work, Coffin, and their numerous followers, requires more than a passing notice, because many players have joined the ranks of the common-sense players, allured by specious arguments and by the parading of deals specially gotten up or actually played, in which gains were made over the long-suit openings, owing to the favorable position of the cards or to the bad play of the other side.

When this system was inaugurated it was understood that the original lead of the hand was always to be from a short suit, including a singleton; but this kind of game did not work well, and singletons and weak two-card suits were abandoned, and leads were confined to "supporting cards" of a certain rank. Then came a partial back-down—a long-suit lead with trump strength and cards of re-entry, or a strengthening card from your long suit, if too weak to play the long-suit game; otherwise lead the best card of your short suit, provided it is above an eight and not

higher than a queen: all these plays in preference to leading from a suit in which you hold either a major or a minor tenace.

Still the short-suiters wandered in the cheerless desert of uncertainty, and when they called on their Moses to lead them to the promised land of system he frankly admitted that the land was not yet in sight, but would no doubt be reached in due course of time.

The hope thus held out to his followers by Mr. Foster has evidently proved delusive, for the methods of common-sense play as defined by him can scarcely be considered a system. He says: "Common-sense players use no number showing leads, no trump signals, no echoes, no four-signals, no calls through honors turned, no directive discards, nor anything of that kind. They confine themselves to the very simple principle of playing strong suits up and weak suits down. None of their plays have any occult meaning, but they simply indicate that they are managing their hands according to their lights.

Their partners are not directed by any private or conventional signals, and are free to infer what they can from the cards played by their partners and the apparent designs of their adversaries." To the beginner the charming simplicity of this unhampered "Chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous" style of game must be very captivating.

Yet this informative game, thus repudiated by the short-suiters, has always been admitted to be the most interesting one, because better than any other it lays the foundation for the play of fine strokes at the end of a hand. Besides, in this game you have the advantage of being able to withhold information whenever you may deem it expedient to do so — for example, when the hand has developed sufficiently to indicate that a dark game is advisable, or when your partner discloses a very poor hand, and especially when you discover that he is not familiar with the recognized rules of play. Matthews puts the latter contingency in this

wise: "It would be of no advantage to speak French like Voltaire if you live with persons who are ignorant of the language."

Deprive the game of its informatory character and it immediately loses its chief attraction, which lies in the striving of each player to make the most of the information imparted alike by friend and foe. For my part, I am free to admit that I would not care to play whist had I no other alternative than to take part in a game where all the participants would have to angle for tricks at hap-hazard in the dark waters of concealment, purposely made murky by this cuttle-fish school of players.

That Mr. Foster knew what he was talking about when he said that there was no system for short-suit play is proved by the fact that Messrs. Howell, Street, Starnes, and Keiley, who have tried their hands at it, have each laid down rules of play totally at variance with those advocated by the others, leaving the short-suiters in a greater quandary than ever.

The perusal of the writings of these authors, with all their new-fangled whims and arbitrary rules, which, clashing with the old ones, necessitates the abandonment of the latter, bring the saddening conviction to the mind that the science of Whist is retrograding; instead of evolution we have involution, which, if persisted in, will gradually bring us back to "Whisk and Swabbers," and from that to the protoplastic epoch of the game.

In my opinion it is susceptible of demonstration that the original lead of a supporting card must result in loss in a certain percentage of cases. It is admitted that an established suit is a power in the game when accompanied by trump strength or cards of re-entry; it cannot be denied that a supporting card helps materially to establish a suit; there are two adversaries to one partner, therefore the chances are two to one that such a card, as an original lead of a hand, will benefit the opponents. But you will answer that the test by actual play does not show any such great

preponderance of advantage. The reason is plain—Duplicate Whist has established the fact that some classes of hands are good for a certain number of tricks, no matter how opened, provided the play is otherwise good. There are other cases—outside of the contingency of the establishment of a suit—where, owing to the position of the cards, sometimes the short-suit lead and sometimes the long-suit lead will result in a gain; but we can assume that this will average in the long-run, for each kind of lead. Again, in some hands the supporting card does not help to establish a suit, and when, in other cases, the suit is established as a consequence of the lead, the favored player cannot bring it in, for lack of strength in trumps or cards of re-entry; but in a certain number of hands he will have the necessary power to bring the established suit into play, and the two-to-one odds will then tell against the lead. The percentage of these cases must necessarily be small, but whatever it may be, it is a constant factor of loss

for the short-suit opening as compared with the long-suit one, which, if it does not result in the bringing-in of the long cards of the suit, works no harm by helping to establish a long suit of the adversaries.

It is probable that this percentage of losing positions has made itself felt in the four or five years during which short-suitism has been running its course, for it is a patent fact that the interest it once evoked is on the wane, and many short-suiters are returning to the practice of the orthodox game.

It is truly a relief to turn from the incongruities of these mongrel systems and empirical rules of play to the consideration of the long-suit scientific game of whist, of which Cavendish was the latest and greatest exponent. Here, at least, we have a game founded on reason, principles, extension of principles, mathematical calculations, and the accumulated experience of a century and a half — all

brought into harmonious action by the aid of certain conventions in accordance with and suggested by principle, with the consequent development of a logical system of play easy to understand and not difficult to follow.

If a beginner should ask why certain leads or plays are made he will get a satisfactory answer. For instance, should he inquire why the fourth-best is led where a long suit is opened with a low card, he will be told, Because every long suit is treated as a four-card suit in order to retain the information conveyed by the lead of the lowest of a four-card suit, as explained in the first part of this work. Why, with two cards remaining of partner's suit after the first round—say the four and two—you return the four in preference to the two? Because you are extending to the small cards the rule which teaches to strengthen and unblock partner's suit by playing out your high card. Why, with the combination of king, queen, knave, and one or more

small, you lead the king with one other and the knave with more than one? Because in the latter case you want to induce your partner to play the ace on your knave to clear your suit, which he would not do if you played the king. Why, after the ace has been played on the knave, you follow with the king, holding five in suit, and with the queen, holding more than five? Because, by extending this system of play to the remaining high indifferent cards of the suit, although the primary reason no longer exists, you give valuable information to your partner as to the number of cards in your long suit. And so on—a good reason for every play.

But, in the purely arbitrary systems, if the learner asks, Why does the lead of a small card denote strength, and why is it a demand for a trump lead from partner? or, Why does the lead of a six, seven, or eight indicate a ruffing game? we answer, Because we have agreed it should have that meaning. Why does the lead of the queen show the ability to win the third round? or

why does a low card played on adversary's lead followed by a higher card show four in the suit? Because it is so nominated in our whist bond, and so on—nothing but prior understanding and agreement. As there are several systems of that kind, it is impossible that they can all be sound. The question as to which is the best has but little interest for the adherents of the long-suit system, who naturally consider their game the best of all.

Another argument of the short-suiters in support of their game is that it is more difficult to play, and consequently more interesting, than the informative long-suit game, which, apparently, is entirely too easy for them. Yet when they all followed the latter system I do not remember that the whist public was dazzled by numerous grand *coups*, or by many instances of trumping with the best trump to throw the lead with a losing one, or by playing the second-best card on the best, holding major-tenace over minor-tenace on the right as the only chance of winning three

out of the last four tricks, or many brilliant plays to the score, etc. It is a mortifying admission to make, but we long-suiters cannot deny that the game, which is too easy for the short-suiters, taxes our brains to no small extent.

Having alluded to playing to the score, a few remarks on that subject may not be amiss, because many of those who play duplicate whist exclusively do not seem to realize the full significance of the term, imagining that the play consists merely in a backward game when the score is advanced, or in risking the loss of a trick to win the game, when otherwise a score of six would be a certainty. In its broader sense, playing to the score means that, when you require a certain number or all of the remaining tricks to save the game, the play must be shaped to that end. There is no incident in a game of whist more interesting to a player than when he is faced with a problem of that kind, and he has but one course to pursue in order

to solve it. He generally knows the position of some of the cards, and he must assume that the others lie favorably for the desired result, and then play accordingly, all usual rules being disregarded. This point cannot be better illustrated than by quoting James Clay, the foremost English whist-player of his day, who makes it very clear to the beginner. He says:

"Let me take a tolerably obvious example, because it is obvious and fresh in my memory, and not as being an unusually fine *coup*, for any good player would have played in the same way.

"There are five cards in hand and four trumps only remain in. Of those I hold the tenace (call it ace and queen), and I know that my right-hand adversary holds the remaining two (call them king and knave). He also holds a thirteenth card of another suit. My remaining cards are the ace, king, and a small card of another suit; I know nothing more of the position of the cards, but in order to save the

game it is necessary for me to make every trick, and it is my lead.

"Place these cards before you and you will see that if I play, in the ordinary way, my ace and king, I have lost the game, as my right-hand adversary must make one trick.

"There is but one chance for me, viz.: to put my partner into the lead, when, if he has the best cards of the fourth suit, I shall throw on them my ace and king of diamonds, remaining with my tenace of trumps; or if my right-hand adversary should trump this fourth suit, I overtrump him, draw his other trump, and make my ace and king, in either case winning the required five tricks.

"I therefore play my small card. This *coup* came off, my partner made the trick and held the two best cards in the fourth suit, which he very properly played. The combination is, comparatively, with many others, a simple one, yet it serves to illustrate my meaning, as it necessitated, as the one single possibility of saving the

game, the favorable event of four chances. My partner must be able to win the first trick; he must hold at least two winning cards in the fourth suit, and my right-hand adversary must hold at least one of my suit."

Clay, furthermore, says: "The success of your acuteness may not be frequent, for in an intricate combination the chances will, of course, generally defeat you, and you may feel that, after all your pains, the difference between a merely good player and yourself is practically very slight; but when the position of the cards favor you, and the chance which you have foreseen comes off, you will be well repaid by a pleasant recollection of your skill for many a long day, and by the consciousness that you take rank among the masters of the game."

This very interesting feature of playing to the score is lacking in duplicate whist; hence, in that game, the opportunity for fine play does not present itself so often as in ordinary or "straight" whist, as it is generally called.

My advice to beginners is to learn the long-suit, Anglo-American Leads system in all its details, including the play of second and third hands, and the other rules of the game; when pretty well grounded in these, practise with players who follow the same system, confining yourself at first to the observation of the main features of the game. You will have, as the original leader, an easy rule for opening your hand, for you must always hold a suit of at least four cards, and you will find out that the small cards of an established suit are just as effective for trick-making, when accompanied with trump strength, as aces and kings, and that they are, moreover, potent instruments for forcing adverse trumps.

You will soon realize the fact that, from the constitution of your hand, you will probably not be able to bring in your long suit, if established; still you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have opened your hand in a manner less liable to entail loss than any other you could have selected. You will learn, too, that

it is sometimes better to lead from a short strong suit than a very weak long suit; but you are not a short-suiter for all that, for such exceptions are noted by all writers who advocate the long-suit system. After practising in this way for some time, if you have any aptitude for the game, you will be a very acceptable partner for more advanced players, who, seeing your willingness to learn, will give you all the assistance at their command.

When you find that you are pitted against short-suiters, cover, second hand, the supporting card led, and, unless you have a powerful suit to open, generally return the suits of the adversaries, for it is part of their strategy to lie in ambush in the other suits, behind tenaces—major, minor, double, simple, or potential; the latter, especially, has a particular charm for the short-suiter, who hangs on to his potential, losing tricks, until he is at last forced to lead from it, and all his bottled-up potentiality ends in a harmless little fizz. If your adversaries are followers of

Howell, and of other conventionalists, you must meet them on their own ground, which necessitates, however, the arduous task of learning their various conflicting methods. But, under all circumstances, open your long, strong suit when you have the lead of the hand.

This multiplicity of systems and innovations tends greatly to destroy the interest in whist, as it discourages those who desire to learn the game, and imposes an additional and heavy burden on teams who engage in the contests for trophies, who must become thoroughly familiar with all the various methods of their opponents; otherwise, those methods would, for the nonce, be equivalent to private conventions between the players using them, who would thereby obtain decisive advantages over their adversaries.

The experimental stage through which whist is now passing in this country accounts for its present chaotic state. The improvement mania was sure to come, and

it is our misfortune that it came in our time, spoiling our enjoyment of the game; but the worst is now probably over, because the field has apparently been thoroughly exploited. As experience in actual play increases, it becomes more evident every day that the interest in these novelties is declining, and it is but a question of time when, with a very few exceptions, they will be relegated to the limbo where many other whist fads and hobbies are now quietly resting.

Part III

Anglo-American Leads

WHERE no distinction is made, the leads are the same in plain suits and in trumps.

Number in suit means original number.

Ace, King, Queen, Knave

With four in suit, lead king, then knave.

With five in suit, lead knave, then ace.

With six in suit, lead knave, then king.

With more than six in suit, lead knave, then queen.

If knave wins, partner can generally credit you with the ace, besides the king and queen, as a good player, second hand, will cover the knave with the ace.

This exceptional combination of high indifferent cards allows you to show a greater number in suit than any other.

Ace, King, Queen

With four in suit, lead king, then queen.

With five in suit, lead queen, then ace.

With more than five in suit, lead queen, then king.

Ace, King, Knave

With four in suit, lead king, then ace.

With more than four in suit, lead ace, then king.

In trumps, if there is no special urgency for two rounds, it is considered justifiable play, after leading king or ace, as the case may be, to change the suit and finesse the knave on the return, especially if queen is turned up to your right.

You may follow the same line of play in plain suits, but the question of risking the finesse of the knave will depend on the fall of the cards, or your strength in trumps, or your possession of cards of reentry in the other suits.

Ace, King, and Small

With four in suit, lead king, then ace.

With more than four in suit, lead ace, then king.

In trumps, lead ace, then king, with five or more small ones; otherwise lead fourth-best, unless the necessity of two rounds is apparent.

Ace, Queen, Knave, Ten

With four in suit, lead ace, then ten.

With more than four in suit, lead ace, then knave.

Lead the ten after the knave, to inform your partner that you still command the suit with the queen.

Ace, Queen, Knave, and Small

With four in suit, lead ace, then queen.

With more than four in suit, lead ace, then knave.

Ace, Queen, Ten, Nine

With four or five in suit, lead nine.

With more than five in suit, lead ace, then nine.

In trumps, lead nine, unless you have more than six trumps, when lead ace, then nine.

Ace, Queen, Ten

With four or five in suit, lead fourth-best.

With more than five in suit, lead the ace, then the fourth-best, counting from and including the ace, which is the original fourth-best.

In trumps, lead the fourth-best, unless you have more than six trumps, when lead ace, followed as above.

When knave is turned up to your right, lead queen.

Ace, Knave, Ten, Nine

With four or five in suit, lead nine.

With more than five in suit, lead ace, then nine.

In trumps, lead nine, unless you have more than six trumps, when lead ace, then nine.

Although these two nine leads range themselves under the fourth-best system,

they would be led in any case to force an honor from adverse hands.

Ace and Small

including all long suits headed by ace, other than those hereinbefore enumerated.

With four or five in suit, lead fourth-best.

With more than five in suit, lead ace, then original fourth-best.

In trumps, lead the fourth-best, unless you have more than six trumps, when lead ace, then original fourth-best.

The lead in plain suits, of the fourth-best with the foregoing combinations headed by the ace, is a comparatively new departure from the old system of leading the ace, and I believe is generally the better one, when it is the *original lead* of the hand. You should, however, be guided on this point by the state of the score and your strength in trumps and in the other suits.

Even with six in suit, you may lead fourth-best, say, with four good trumps,

and cards of re-entry in the other suits; also depending on the state of the score, as you should play a conservative game when your score is advanced, and a forward game when the score is adverse.

It may also be noted here that after you have been forced to trump and have opened a plain suit, headed by ace, king, or ace, king, queen, lead the ace first, irrespective of number, otherwise your partner, if void of the suit, might trump your king or queen in order to work the cross-ruff.

King, Queen, Knave, Ten

With four in suit, lead king, then ten.

With five in suit, lead knave, then king.

With more than five in suit, lead knave, then queen.

On the third round lead the ten, to inform your partner that you still command the suit with the king or queen, as the case may be.

King, Queen, Knave

With four in suit, lead king, then knave.

With five in suit, lead knave, then king.

With more than five in suit, lead knave, then queen.

If the knave wins the trick, lead next one of your high cards, as the ace is sometimes held back by the opponent — especially in trumps. If you lead a small card, the ten and ace may both make in adversaries' hands.

King, Queen, Ten

With four in suit, lead king.

With more than four in suit, lead queen.

King, Queen, and Small

With four in suit, lead king.

With more than four, lead queen.

If the queen wins, then the fourth-best, counting from and including the queen — which is the fourth-best of those remaining in hand.

In trumps, lead the fourth-best, unless

you have more than six trumps — when lead queen, and follow as above.

King, Knave, Ten

Lead ten, even if one of your others is the nine. If the ten wins the trick, lead a small card after the ten; the fourth-best counting from and including that card, if the length of the suit admits of that play.

If the ten forces the queen, or both queen and ace:

With four in suit, lead king after ten.

With more than four in suit, lead knave after ten.

If the ten forces the ace only, king must be led after ten.

If you hold the nine also, and the ten forces an honor, lead the nine on the third round, to inform your partner that you still command the suit with the king or knave, as the case may be.

In trumps. With four in suit, lead fourth-best.

With more than four in suit, lead and follow as above.

Some players lead the nine when held with king, knave, ten. There is but little choice between the two leads. I prefer the ten, because it always shows king and knave, and limits the number of nine leads to two.

King, Knave, Nine

In trumps. If ten is turned up to your right, lead knave.

King and Small

including all long suits headed by the king, other than those hereinbefore enumerated.

Lead the fourth-best.

Queen, Knave, Ten, Nine

With four in suit, lead queen, then nine.

With more than four in suit, lead queen, then ten.

On the third round lead the nine, to inform your partner that you still command the suit with the knave.

Queen, Knave, Ten

With four in suit, lead queen, then knave.

With more than four in suit, lead queen, then ten.

Queen, Knave, Nine

In trumps. If ten is turned up to your right, lead queen.

Queen and Small

including all long suits headed by queen, other than those hereinbefore enumerated.

Lead the fourth-best.

Knave, Ten, Nine, Eight

With four in suit, lead eight (fourth-best), then knave.

With five in suit, lead eight, then ten.

With more than five in suit, lead eight, then nine.

Knave, Ten, Nine

Lead the fourth-best.

In trumps. If king or queen is turned up to your left, lead knave.

Knave, Ten, Eight

In trumps. If nine is turned up to your right, lead knave.

Knave and Small

including all long suits headed by the knave, other than those hereinbefore enumerated.

Lead the fourth-best.

Suits of Four or More Cards Without an Honor

Lead the fourth-best.

A classification of the foregoing leads, with reference to the number of leads for each card, and the conditions under which they are made, yields the following results:

Three Ace Leads

I. With king, five or more in suit. *In trumps*, seven or more in suit, unless knave is also held, then five or more in suit.

II. With queen, knave, any number in suit.

III. With any combinations other than the above, six or more in suit. *In trumps*, seven or more in suit.

Two King Leads

I. With ace and any other two cards.

II. With queen and any other two cards.

Two Queen Leads

I. With the ascending sequence, with or without the ace, five or more in suit. *In trumps*, without the ace, seven or more in suit, unless with the ten, then five or more in suit.

II. With the descending sequence to the ten inclusive, four or more in suit.

One Knave Lead

With the ascending sequence, with or without the ace.

One Ten Lead

With king, knave, any number in suit.

Two Nine Leads

I. With ace, queen, ten, with or without one small.

II. With ace, knave, ten, with or without one small.

In trumps, with any number in suit not exceeding six.

All Other Combinations

The fourth-best is led.

The learner will have perceived from the analysis of the leads, and from the summary of the same, that the original leads from all combinations of the cards are not so numerous, after all. As to the second lead, he ought generally to be able to determine for himself the card to be led when he is left with high indifferent cards of the suit, if only he bear in mind the principle involved in the leads from the typical combination of ace, queen, knave, where the queen is led after the ace when the suit is short,

and where the knave is led after the ace when the suit is long. Therefore, the longer the suit, the smaller the card to be led on the second round, and the selection of the right card is thus made easy for the beginner.

My task is done. I would be better contented with it if a certain personal pronoun did not make itself so conspicuous all through it. Suppression was tried in vain; it would not down. So I crave my reader's indulgence for this obtrusive egotist, in consideration of the earnest effort made to give them an insight into the development of American Leads, and to restore confidence in the long-suit game as played in combination with the Anglo-American system of leads, which, after all, appears to be the most satisfactory yet devised.

THE END

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